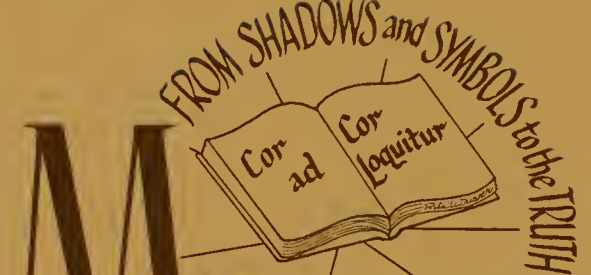

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TRIBES OF THE NIGER DELTA

COPY OF AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH OF KALABARI CHIEFS.

SITTING; TO LEFT, CHIEF DAVIES: TO RIGHT; CHIEF WILL BRAID.

Frontispiece.

TRIBES OF THE NIGER DELTA

THEIR RELIGIONS AND CUSTOMS

P. AMAURY TALBOT

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FOREWORD

Most of the matter contained herein was gained during the years 1914–1916 ; the delay in publication has been due to the pressure of other work. Except where otherwise stated, the facts have been corroborated from several sources.

The words of native informants are given with only so much alteration as to make them understandable and, when not spoken originally in English, they are translated as literally as possible.

Further information about these tribes may be found in ' The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,' published in 1926.

I am indebted to my first wife for very material help and for the descriptive parts.

P. Amaury Talbot.

Ogoja, Nigeria, 1930.

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TRIBES OF THE NIGER DELTA

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Geographical and Historical

Degama Division, with which this book chiefly deals, stretches, roughly speaking, from the Niger and Santa Barbara on the west to the Imo and Andoni Rivers on the east, and from Owerri and Onitsha Divisions on the north to the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. It comprises an area of 3,670 square miles, with a population of nearly half a million, and includes the former Districts of Degama (now officially termed Degema), Ahoada, Bonny, and that part of Abaw which lies to the east of the Niger.

The southern portion consists of an extensive region of mangrove swamps, interspersed with unsuspected stretches of dry land and numberless creeks, many of which were previously unknown to white men.

There are four large river estuaries, varying in width from the 1½ miles of the Santa Barbara to the 8-mile mouth of the Bonny and New Calabar Rivers. Santa Barbara and San Bartholomeo are really the easternmost branches of the Niger Delta, as through their mouths pour the waters of the Egenni, most of which comes from the Niger proper by way of the Orashi. The Sombreiro also receives a large amount of Egenni water, but returns a part of this, by various creeks, into the San Bartholomeo.

The Sombreiro and New Calabar Rivers form the outlet

of the central region ; while the eastern parts are drained by the Imo, its big tributary the Otaminni, and, to a certain extent, by the Bonny River, though the latter is, properly speaking, an arm of the sea. These, combined with the large number of navigable creeks, make the country almost unsurpassed for facilities of water transport, and it is therefore natural that it should form one of the most important centres of trade in Africa.

Perhaps the most interesting point, geographically speaking, is the amount of evidence to support the theory of a gradual subsidence of the whole region—a movement which is still in progress. Though this rests almost entirely upon native information, it is confirmed from so many sources as to warrant belief in its accuracy. Save for accretions to the southernmost islands, between the mouths of the New Calabar and Bonny Rivers, all creeks and watercourses appear to have been fewer and smaller some three hundred years ago, while the dry land was far more extensive in comparison with the mangrove swamps. Towards the end of 1914 the case of Punch Harry Braid *v.* Serabia was brought before the New Calabar Native Court. In the course of his evidence the plaintiff stated that about two hundred years ago there was only a small, shallow creek at Ilellima, which his forefathers often crossed on foot, in place of the present stretch of water nearly two miles in breadth. This assertion was not questioned by the other party, and all the chiefs present were unanimous in testifying that this was a matter of common knowledge.

Another definite statement was made by the inhabitants of Ke, an extremely ancient town to the south of the district—viz. that, at the celebration of their chief play, it was the custom for men, women and children to wade and swim across the river, which was formerly only about one-third of its present width and far shallower than now.[1]

Many Kalabari chiefs state that, when their settlement was

[1] According to the testimony of Chief Sampson Adoki, a similar custom obtains among Okrikans. Its object is to wash away all evil influence from the inhabitants, that they may start the new season under favourable conditions.

first established near the mouth of the New Calabar River, the waterway was scarcely half its present breadth or depth.

Mr. B. M. Pepple related the following folk-story about the deepening of this river :

'A poor old woman went for fire-wood. She took with her her only smoking pipe ; unfortunately she lost it. This grieved her much. She took a manilla and went far, closing the mouth of the river. She called upon many powerful jujus, Opu Adumu and others, and then brake the manilla and threw it in the mouth of the river ; the water came in. The old woman was drowned because she could not walk quicker and the water overtook her. The salt water came in so much and formed the rivers because the woman invoked the most powerful water jujus.'

The people of Oru-Sangama and many other old towns hidden among the mangrove swamps say that the solid ground used to be much more extensive than now, and that the water has gradually encroached upon it.

A like process seems to have taken place inland, at any rate as regards the Otaminni River, though this may have been partly due to the action of the current. According to Otaminni of Opioro, late head priest of the river juju of the same name :

'In olden days this water, now so deep and strong, was only a small stream over which people could walk. A woman of Egui, whose daughter was married to a man at Chokocho, used often to pass over, on foot, to visit her child on the far side ; while the latter also frequently walked across to see her parents.'

The daughter died only last year, which shows that the Otaminni was fordable some sixty years ago.

The solid land to the north forms a dead plain, but little above sea-level, built mainly of alluvial soil brought down by the rivers. It is densely populated and, owing to frequent clearings for farms, little thick bush remains save for a mile or two by the river banks and along the various town boundaries. From a botanical point of view therefore, with the exception of parts of Ahoada District, the country is

disappointing and comparatively few varieties of new flowers were found.

Everywhere roads and rivers are fenced by a border of trees, shrubs and creepers, the never-ending variety of whose leaves makes up in beauty and interest for the dearth of flowers, of which one so often hears complaint. This so-called dearth is more apparent than real, and is partly due to the fact that, when the sun climbs high in the heavens and most people are abroad, many flowers are sleeping. To give an instance :

We were once passing, near noon, between Okomoko and Egui. The road here is broad and smooth, with scarcely a blade of grass to mar its well-kept surface. On either side the bush forms a wall of green, monotonous enough in the blazing sunshine when hardly a leaf-shape can be distinguished in the universal glare.

No sooner, however, does the sun sink low in the west than a subtle change begins. As though by the silent stirring of unseen hands, creepers lift and part, while, through the rifts, small points of pearl appear, which slowly and soundlessly unfold into a whole world of loveliness before the eyes of those who chance to pass by.

From bush to bush and tree to tree, far as the eye can reach, trails of the wonderful moon-flower convolvulus hang their fragrant garlands, so thick-clustered in places as to form impenetrable veils of shimmering white and green. Then, when the full moon climbs slowly into the mysterious blue overhead, her gentle rays seek out and seem to linger lovingly on each of the great starry blooms, which shine from the velvet darkness of their heart-shaped leaves as if with a radiance all their own.

Over and over again in open spaces, along dusty road or waste lands fringing towns, where, by day, nothing but stunted bush or sun-wilted leaves are to be seen, nightfall brings the same transformation. The drooping foliage takes on a dewy freshness amid which the countless great convolvuli ‘ unveil ’ their ‘ beauties to the moon.’ Yet few, save Cynthia’s self, deem the sight worth so much as a glance.

The well-defined geographical limit between the swamps and the firm land also serves as a dividing line between the peoples. The dry part to the north is inhabited by various branches of the great Ibo nation, while to the south, amid the marshlands, dwell the Ijaw—all of which were hitherto unstudied. The latter people inhabit practically the whole coast, some 250 miles in length, stretching between the Ibibio and Yoruba. The Niger Delta, therefore, is, with the exception of a few small tribes, occupied by this strange people—a survival from the dim past, beyond the dawn of history—whose language and customs are distinct from those of their neighbours and without trace of any tradition of a time before they were driven southward into these regions of sombre mangrove.

The Ijaw may be divided into three sub-tribes, Western, Lower (Brass) and Kalabari. The last named dwell in the southern portion of Degama Division, and their powerful clan is better known among Europeans as New Calabars, to distinguish them from the people of (Old) Calabar to the east ; they were originally called Awome, after their earliest home of which memory survives, in the region of Olu Amafa on the right bank of the upper New Calabar River.

Owing to constant pressure from the southward-driving Ibo, the majority of the clan migrated several hundred years ago to Kalabari, one of their former fishing villages on the western bank of the same river, about fourteen miles from its mouth.

Later, white men gave it the name of ' Old Shipping '—probably from the large number of trading vessels which put in there. One tradition tells of the coming of some Efik settlers from Calabar, but possibly this only arose from an attempt to explain the origin of the name Kalabari.

The earliest European arrivals were apparently Portuguese, and, for a long time, later comers of other nationalities were called by this name. The strangers are said to have made their first appearance near Kula, but were so maltreated by the men of this town that they left and established themselves on the New Calabar River. Their trade chiefly consisted in exchanging cloth, iron, etc., for slaves. They

usually lived on their ships, which stayed several months in the river; but they also erected, on the lands of friendly chiefs, stores and yards called barrikos, where the slaves brought down to the coast were kept. The principal barriko was in the compound of Chief Awo and, later, of Odum. When the traders went home, they left goods with the chiefs with which to buy slaves, who would be ready on their return. The principal slave marts were Isokpo and Aloa on the upper New Calabar River, and Ndelle on the Sombreiro. The prevalence of slave-dealing raids accounts for the fact that, even now, scarcely a town of an interior tribe is situated on a river but about two or three miles inland, where there was a possibility of escape into the bush.

The most famous of the Kalabari kings was Amakiri (Ama, 'town'; Kiri, 'place'), generally anglicised into Amachree, who was the slave and adopted son of Kalagbaa. It was during his reign that Danish guns were introduced, and it was, no doubt, mostly through possession of these new weapons that Amakiri became the greatest and most powerful king in this part of the world, reigning from the New Calabar River, in the east, nearly to Brass in the west, and monopolised the entire trade with tribes of the interior. He was, however, unable to conquer Bonny despite frequent attempts.

A story about Amakiri I, as told by the Kalabari chief Obenibo, describes how the Kalabari king once met a Bile man, whom he sent to Pepple, the ruling chief of Bonny, with a message that, so great was his power, he could come any day and carry off whichever of the latter's subjects he chose—even the king's mother. Pepple replied that his rival could never fulfil such a boast. Thereon Amakiri returned to his town weeping, and when asked the cause of his grief told his people of the Bonny man's taunt, which roused their fighting spirit. On an appointed day, therefore, the Kalabari set out, and chanced to meet an Okrikan who was fishing for the King of Bonny's mother. Him they bribed to persuade his mistress to come down to the water-side for the catch, and, on her so doing, seized her and placed

her in the forefront of one of their war canoes. They then paddled to Bonny in order to show their captive to the enemy, firing off cannon from their bows.

The next part of the story was contributed by Mr. B. M. Pepple, Native Court Clerk at Elele and the son of one of the principal Bonny chiefs :

'At once, on seeing the invaders, our king ran into his juju house and brought forth a magic medicine, some of which he poured out upon the ground ; but set up the rest before his juju. The effect of this was to take away all power of motion from the enemy canoes. The Kalabari fired several times ; but their shots went wide, because of the protective juju. Then, when they saw the Bonny men advancing to the attack, they decided to retreat ; but their canoes were held fast by the magic and could not move. At that moment, however, the daughter of the King of Bonny, who had entered the juju shrine, unfortunately happened to upset the bowl of medicine placed there to hold the enemy. At once the spell was broken, the canoes moved on and the Kalabari fled up a creek called Owu-Ma-Bokku ; but before they got away a cannon-shot took off the upraised stern of their chief canoe.'

To continue the story as related by Chief Obenibo :

'On reaching home, Amakiri of the Kalabari wanted to kill the Bonny mother ; but his men objected for fear of reprisals and the woman was sent back, richly robed and with a drink offering for the Bonny paddlers. Amakiri was heart-broken at being forced to surrender his captive, and died soon afterwards.'

According to the Kalabari, Amakiri I reigned for a long time, and became so old that he handed over the rule to his eldest son, Ama-Kuru (Amakiri II) during his lifetime—a version which quite omitted the fact that he was captured and killed by his bitter enemy the King of Bonny, who, at a feast celebrating his victory, ate the heart of his great opponent.

Kalabari and Bonny history is chiefly composed of the 'wars' due to trade jealousy between the two clans, who controlled the whole trade of this part of the coast and acted

as middlemen between the European traders and the people of the interior.

About 1876 Bonny fighting men penetrated as far as Degama, and the remains of trenches between that town and Ilellima, dug during this ' war,' are still to be seen.

In consequence of civil strife, the Kalabari left the site known as ' Old Shipping ' and settled, in parties and at different times, at their former slave villages, Abonnema, Buguma, and Bakana. So far as can be found out, the original name of Abonnema was Mbana Ama, *i.e.* ' the Plantain Town,' and of Buguma Buku Ama, ' the Town of Women Alone.' The singularity of this name makes it possible that this is the place referred to in the tradition found among the Ibibio of an Amazons' town,[1] which lay, according to their account, ' a long way to the westward, past Opobo and past Bonny.' The names are said to have been given by former slave inhabitants of the Sobo tribe, most of whom were apparently brought down from the Egenni by Amakiri I. Their descendants still live in bush villages a few miles from the town.

Among Kalabari, Abonnema is known as Monni (' a coveted place ') ; Bakana as Oba Ama, *i.e.* the town of Chief Odum, who once travelled as far as Benin (the king of which is known as the Obba) ; and Buguma as Asari, on account of the red laterite in the bed of the river near by.

The present-day Bakanas were the first to leave ' Old Shipping,' which they did under the leadership of Will Braid, the head of their House, in 1880. They first settled in their old villages of Ewawfe and Isoba, thus cutting off from their enemies all the trade of the upper New Calabar River, and finally, somewhat later, made Bakana their headquarters.

In 1882 Bonny, which had taken the side of the Braid ' House,' surrounded Kalabari town and nearly annihilated its inhabitants. King Amakiri, with most of the survivors, then migrated to Buguma, while the rest went on to Abonnema, where the Braid family had originally intended to settle.

[1] *Life in Southern Nigeria* (Macmillan).

Bakana is the smallest of the three towns, as it contains only the members of the Braid House, while many families live at Abonnema and Buguma.

Other Ijaw towns at the mouth of the New Calabar River, such as Tema, Karakarama, Ifawkaw (called Fouché by Europeans), Sangama, Iwama and Tombia (or Young Town), also migrated to their present sites about the same time ; to be followed by the European traders, who established themselves on shore. The old sites—now called Eleme Tema, Eleme Karakarama, etc.—are at present inhabited only by fishermen. The people of Tombia are said to have come originally from the neighbourhood of Bonny.

Since the stoppage of the slave trade the Kalabari have devoted themselves almost exclusively to fishing and trading. By means of colonies, placed in the upper reaches of the rivers, they control the greater part of the inland trade and act as middlemen between the European merchants and Ibo producers. In this they are greatly helped by their almost entire control of the fishing grounds ; for dried fish here, as throughout West Africa, is one of the most highly prized articles of food. They are people of great interest and intelligence, hard-headed, keen-witted, and born traders. Indeed, one of the principal agents here, a man of world-wide experience, stated that, in his opinion, the Kalabari could compete on at least equal terms with Jew or Chinaman. Although the youth of the community show the usual signs of deterioration since the coming of the white man loosened the former bonds of discipline, the chiefs themselves are far less spoilt by European influence than those of most coastal tribes.

In the old days, partly owing to their enterprise and partly to their proximity to the factories and consequent command of European arms and goods, the Kalabari gained supremacy over nearly all the Ijaw in the district. The only section which appears to have defied them successfully were the Okrikans, whose capital is situated on a small island at the north of the Bonny River, and who have a considerable Ibo strain through intermarriage with that race.

The story of their coming was given us in manuscript form by Chief Sampson Adoki of Okrika, and will be found

in his account of the origin of the great national juju Fene-Be-So, of which it forms part. This, however, differs entirely from the Kalabari version, which runs as follows :

'In the time of Amakiri I the Okrikans seized their island, after killing a Kalabari named Isela, who was descended from one of the original settlers. Amakiri at once instituted a punitive expedition, and the story goes that the Okrikans were compelled to flee so swiftly that it was impossible to carry their children away with them. The latter were therefore left hidden in the great fish-smoking baskets, but were discovered by the Kalabari and taken to a place, ever afterwards called Nama-Sibbi ["meat head"], where they were killed together with all other captives made in this raid. Most of the skulls were left on the spot, but some were taken to the principal Kalabari towns to be used in the celebration of the warriors' Peri Play. After this, it is related, the Okrikans sent a deputation to King Amakiri in order to make their submission.'

Besides the Kalabari Isela, a Bonny man called Ogoloma —after whom one of the present towns is named—is said to have been found in possession of the island at the coming of the invaders. Some accounts state that the Okrikans originally came from Asakura and other towns to the north, but the neighbouring villages of Ogu, Bolo, etc., seem to have been inhabited by them for several hundred years. Their customs differ to a certain extent from those of the Kalabari, and, owing to land and fishing palavers, there has been bitter feeling between the two peoples for several years past. These differences have lately, however, been settled, and it is hoped that the better relations now happily brought about may prove lasting.

The Okrikans have established an uncanny reputation among neighbouring tribes, by whom it is affirmed that 'Okrikans understand water more than any other river-side people. They can go down into the depths and catch fish by hand alone, without spear or net.' Many are said to be able to stay for days at a time beneath the surface, like the Buduma of Lake Chad ; and of one renowned fisherman, named Aba Bile, it is commonly said that he can even live

under water for weeks, reappearing with enormous catches. The great throwing spears used by this tribe against crocodile, manatee, and the larger kinds of fish, such as the dog-toothed mangrove perch, are mostly five-pronged, with hafts twelve feet and more in length. These powerful weapons are regarded askance by neighbouring peoples, who assert that they are often used to provide human victims for the cannibal juju Fene-Be-So. At dusk, people chosen by the juju priest are said to hide in the shadows of the mangrove swamps till some belated trader or fisherman chances to pass by. The great spear is hurled, the canoe overturned and the unfortunate victim secured for sacrifice.

The remaining Ijaw in Degama District, except Bile, acknowledged the supremacy of the Kalabari and are now usually called by the latter name.

Perhaps the oldest settlement hereabouts is at Ke, situated near the coast on the Ke Toro. The antiquity of this town can be seen at a glance by the depth and extent of its kitchen middens, sections of which have been laid bare by the ebb and flow of the tide. When questioned as to the number of its kings, the head chief sent for a woman named Kala Dokku, who proved to be the tribal historian. She took up the tale and recited the following list of rulers :

'The first King of Ke was Omonie, and Omonie begat Salu, and Salu begat Obobaw, and Obobaw begat Ausa . . .' and so on. After Ausa the list was given as follows : Ojiji, Okari, Na, Naw Benebo, Beria, Ekpiri Ngbe, Obusa, Angba, Angbiye, Orodoki, Oru-Teme, Fari-Baka, Bolo, Oso-Kolo, Ogola, Bela, Belaiye Oru-Teme, Omonie Pokkubaw, Ngeri, Ngeri II, Oria Baribia, Adaiye Benebo, Omonie Opuduko, Opu-Wari, Oru-Tubaw, Onu, Opu-Ogbu, Oboriye-So, Loloma, Akari-Obu, Isibeiye Igoni, Suaiye Ada, Brre, Edebo, Tomin-Uma, Ngbebe, Kenisa, Anjiye Bokku, Keni Sapiye, Opu-Jaja, Ala-Bria, Beriaiye Inoma, Okpaiye Pokkubaw, Minni Biye, Damibi, Mimmie Pokkubaw, Omonie Odubaw, Duko Dibi-Jemia, Fari-Baka, Anga-Sie-Kinebaw, Ogbo-Mago, Ngubia, Obi-Iye, Kala-Pokku-Gbainbaw, Asawo, Ngiriye Ekine and Kala Benebo, who died eight years ago.

'Each was the son of his father, but the mothers were taken from different Houses.'

One of these kings, either Opu-Wari or Opu-Ogbu, is said never to have died, but to have climbed up to the sky, several hundred years ago, by a rope which was let down for the purpose.[1] He was thereafter called Opu-So, a name by which the chief juju of the town was also known.

During the recital the whole of the townsfolk sat round, greeting each fresh name with a chorus of deep-toned grunts of affirmation, save when an occasional voice was raised to protest that two names had been transposed in the recital. On this an animated discussion ensued till the matter was at length adjusted to the satisfaction of everyone. The interest shown by all proved that the keeping of the kingly record unchanged was held to be a matter of importance.

Ke is said to have been originally an independent town, but was subdued by Kalabari after the arrival of the latter at 'Old Shipping.' In olden days it is reputed to have held as many inhabitants as Bonny, Brass or Kalabari, and the reason for the decrease in numbers is given as follows :

'The people of Ke—or Keni as they are called—grew proud by reason of their multitude ; so they told a native doctor to order one of the biggest trees in the bush to fall down upon them, for they were strong enough to hold it up ; but the tree fell and killed many. After some years the remaining townsfolk went to another doctor and asked him to dry up all the water out of the Ke Toro, so that they could go down into its bed and snare a great catch. The magician did as they bade, and many fish were caught in consequence. After a time he called to them to return, as the spell would not hold much longer, but they refused. Therefore he picked up his medicine, and the waters flowed back and drowned those disobedient people.'

After the Kalabari had subdued Ke, this town was appointed the peace-maker between surrounding tribes. A description of the highly symbolical ritual observed on such occasions will be found on page 332.

Probably this is the town referred to in Hutchinson's book

[1] For similar stories see *Life in Southern Nigeria.*

(1858) : ' At some locality between Brass and New Kalabar is a tribe entitled by inhabitants of both places " God-country people." They are head juju men referred to in all grievous difficulties.'

Kula, another old town near the coast to the west, furnished a list of twenty-three ruling chiefs, viz. : Kula, Opu-Tabo, Opu-Oku, Baw-Oye, Opu-Singi, Opu-Akia, Opu-Wari, Opu-Ebe, Okkaw, Piri-Owi, Kala-Oruye, Ama-Eria, Mabio, Ada, Sira, Beku, Oru-Parabaw, Ikpuru, Sima, Sanga, Ombu, Igbe and Silk.

Other ancient towns are Tema, Abissa and Ilellima, which were established on their present sites before the building of Bile, which lies not far from Ke and in olden days was a very powerful place. The inhabitants are said to have come originally from near Ogonokum, north of Degema, on the right bank of the Sombreiro, and to have owned the whole lower stretches of the river. So rich were they that they gave Ndelle Water-side as a wedding gift to a chief's daughter on her marriage with King Opubu of Bonny. It was in this way that the Bonny colony at Ndelle started.

About a hundred years ago Bile is said to have been attacked by the Kalabari King Karibo, helped by Kumangala (Will Braid) and Otaji (George Will). Nearly all the invaders were killed, especially those of the Barribo House, of which Otaji was the head. On the return of the remnant to ' Old Shipping,' the dominant juju Awome-Ka-So was angry and announced by the mouth of her priestess : ' It was I who caused so many of you to die. Had I not wished to save some for the town, not one of the chiefs would have come back. I am angry with you, because Awoba [the chief juju of Bile] is my sister. From to-day you must never again shed Bile blood.'

On hearing this, the Kalabari made a great sacrifice in order to appease the wrath of Awome-Ka-So, and from that time forth never again fought with the men of Bile.

The people of Bonny, at the mouth of the river of the same name, are a mixed Ibo-Ijaw race, the Ibo portion of which is said to have come down from Azumini several hundred

years ago and to have intermarried with the earlier Ijaw settlers.

According to Captain Crow, at the end of the eighteenth century, 'The inhabitants of Bonny . . . amounted to about 3,000. They are chiefly a mixture of the Eboe, or Heebo, and the Brass tribes. It is possible that . . . Bonny and the towns on the low line of the coast on either side of it were originally peopled from the Eboe country, and that before the commencement of the slave trade, if it then existed ; the inhabitants employed themselves in the making of salt, by evaporation from sea water.'

Mr. B. M. Pepple gives the legendary history of Bonny as follows :

'Okolo-Ama ("Curlew Town") is the original name of Bonny. Its founder was a hunter who came from Azumini down to the sea, for in those days no river existed. He saw the sand-banks all covered with curlew, and therefore named the place Okolo-Ama. On returning home he told his people that he had found a fine spot fit for human settlement, so many followed him and began to build a town there. Unfortunately there was no drinking water, so the new-comers said : "Either we must go back or die."

'Among them was a very powerful juju priest named Alagbaria, the law of whose juju was that he might never touch anything made by white men. He had a daughter, Asi-Minni by name, whom he brought out, after consulting his juju, and set upon a chair in the sight of all the people. In front of her a table was placed, and upon this a cup or beaker, carved from wood and containing some liquid. This she drank, a little at a time, singing native songs and calling upon the juju for help. Gradually she sank into the earth and was seen no more, but from the spot where she disappeared a stream of fine drinking water gushed out and was called by her name Asi-Minni Minji. Now the place is usually known as Asi-Mebia, but some of the old people call it Asi-Minni Minji to this day.'

The only other Ijaw in this Division live on the Niger to the south of Abaw. These regard Patani as their paramount town. Unfortunately not much information could be gained

respecting them, except that those settled at Ase, on the Ndonni creek, originally came from Onita, and those of Agberi from Pakyama.

Such is the history, so far as it could be gathered, of the dwellers in the marsh-lands by the sea.

The northern part of the Division is mainly inhabited by some 300,000 Ibo, forming the southernmost section of this great people. The name Ibo has indeed only lately penetrated to this region, the inhabitants of which, though undoubtedly of the same stock as those dwelling farther northward, are known among themselves as Ihura-Onhia ('face or front of the country'). Save the literal meaning here given, no explanation of the name could be discovered. Ibo are known to the Kalabari as Biri.

Those of this nation who dwell to the east of the Sombreiro belong to the Ikwerri sub-tribe, which numbers about 150,000 souls, and to the Etche, some 50,000 strong, who are settled in the north-western corner. To the westward, in Ahoada territory, live the Ekkpahia, usually called Ekpaffia by other tribes, and the Okoba (divided into the Age, Iburu and Omokku clans), about 30,000 each, and the Ale-Nsaw and Abaw-Ndonni, about 15,000 each.

The Egenni on the western bank of the juju river of the same name and the people of Bush Degama, Bush Abonnema, etc., formed for some time an ethnographical puzzle, the solution of which there seemed little chance of determining until time could be found to work out their vocabularies. Later, however, it transpired that these peoples were branches of the Sobo sub-tribe of Edo, the nearest of whom are the Igabo, inhabiting a few towns to the south of Abaw, while the bulk dwell some hundred miles to the west. Their kinship and origin had previously been as unsuspected by themselves as unknown to others, and indeed was indignantly denied by some, especially the Egenni, who proudly claimed to be autochthonous. In all, they probably number under 20,000 souls. The clue to the riddle was first given by the chief of one of the principal quarters of Joinkarama, who, in reply to the questions which we never failed to put to some of the head-men

of each tribe visited concerning their customs and beliefs, replied :

'The name of our part of the town is Isua. Our people are called Inedua. Onuso, who is the same as Tamuno or Chi, created our forefathers on this bank of the river, and we have lived here ever since. We are of the same race as the Bush Degama and Bush Abonnema people, whither we sent colonies.

'Now many of our people are Christians ; but in olden days, besides Onuso, who was the great creator as well as the God of the Sky and of Thunder, we also worshipped Onyiku, which was our name for the Earth Goddess. This word has no connection with the Ibo Onye-Iku, meaning "big man." Then, too, we worshipped Utepi, a woman juju, to whom we prayed for help on behalf of our yams, children and herds, as also for good catches when fishing. We always sacrificed to this juju when the river was at its highest and ready to fall, saying to Utepi : "The water is now about to go down. Therefore look after us and our children. Let the souls of the people not follow the falling water and so be lost."

'Beside all these, we worshipped our ancestors. When a man's father died, he poured out drink to the spirit, saying : "Asume, yi edudi" ["My father, come and drink"].' It was this invocation which supplied the first clue as to the origin of the people, and, although the chief declared over and over again 'Sobo are quite unknown to us,' later information placed their kinship beyond doubt.

The only other tribes in the Division are the Abuan and the Mbolli. The former number about 30,000 souls and live to the north-west of Degama in a peninsula formed by the Sombreiro and Egenni Rivers. The Mbolli, or Eleme or Nchia as they are known among themselves—some 20,000 strong—dwell to the extreme east, near Okrika. In language, physical type, customs and beliefs they differ absolutely from any of their neighbours in the Division, and at first presented a puzzle which it was difficult to solve.

Investigations showed that they form the easternmost sections of the semi-Bantu peoples, whose main habitat is the

DEGAMA STATION.

JUJU SYMBOLS AND CHARMS AT ENTRANCE TO AN IBO VILLAGE.

facing p. 16.

Cross River region, and they have been classified in ' The Peoples of Southern Nigeria ' as belonging to the Ibibio group. The nearest akin to the Abuan are the Akunakuna, who live some hundred miles to the east, while the Mbolli, with their neighbours the Ogoni and Kwa, appear to be aberrant sections of the Ibibio stock proper, which includes the Efik of Calabar.

Degama, the administrative headquarters of the Division which bears its name, lies on the eastern bank of the Sombreiro River. The word is probably an anglicised version of the Kalabari ' Diki-Ama ' (' town of the watchers ')—so called because, in olden days, sentries were posted here to give warning of the coming of enemy canoes. About 1895 the earliest officials sent by Government arrived in the Sombreiro and took up their abode on the *George Shotton*, formerly one of the fastest clippers in the China tea trade. This hulk was the seat of Government till 1904, when the first permanent buildings were raised on shore. The old vessel is now lying on a sand-bank some half-mile to the northward on the opposite side of the river ; her figure-head is preserved at Degama, and her chronometer was of considerable use in making the accompanying map.

Thanks to the care and pains of the first officials sent hither by Government, the station, as seen from the river, is one of the most pleasing in the Protectorate. Here and there forest trees, left standing when the rest of the bush was cleared away, tower over avenues of mangoes, which shade its broad paths ; while wide stretches of grass, coarse enough at a near view, but smooth and intensely green from a little distance, reach to the water's edge. Lines of flame-coloured Hippeasters border its ways, or grow between clumps of flowering shrubs, so close to the bank as almost to mirror themselves at times amid the shadowed waters from which the river takes its name.

The Sombreiro, here some half mile in width, pours its volume of clear, dark, swift-flowing water backward and forward with the ebb and flow of the tide. Usually the surface is smooth enough and the little fishing canoes glide soundlessly to and fro, often driven by the strokes of small

'piccan' paddlers. Fierce winds spring up at times with appalling suddenness, however, lashing the water into white-capped waves, which dash with an angry hiss against the frail craft.

Most beautiful of all is the time before twilight, when the soft blue of the sky becomes a background for twin sunsets —the real one above the line of mangrove, bitumen dark, which fringes the farther shore, with its reflection all but encircling the horizon, so that the heavens seem ringed about with gardens, such as Dante might have seen among the blessed, whose flaming parterres flaunt flowers of vividest gold, rose and mauve. As the sun sinks, slowly the glory fades, hidden beneath the soft, dim wings of night. Even when the splendour has gone from the sky an after-glow yet lingers a little, touching the dark waters here and there with its faint gleaming, till the Lady Moon rises once more to turn the smooth surface into a pavement of mother-o'-pearl, fitting roof for the strange water spirits who are said to dwell beneath.

FIG. 1.—Carving in the Shrine of Adum', at Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama. (See p. 36.)

CHAPTER II

Religion

Principal Deities

For both Kalabari and Ibo the chief gods are the same, though known, in some cases, under different names. The supreme deity, called Tamuno by Kalabari and Chi or Chineke (Chi-na-eke, 'the Creator') by Ibo, is held, through almost the whole region, as the power at the back of everything—the great First Cause from which gods and men have sprung.

According to the testimony of a considerable number of old chiefs and priests, Amade Onhia, the Thunder God, called by Aro Kamalo, and Igwe, the Sky God, are sons of Chi; while Ale, the Earth Goddess, known to some tribes as Ala, Ana, or Aja, is usually represented as her daughter. The three last-named deities appear to have been adopted by the Kalabari from Ibo sources, and possibly traces of an earlier Kalabari thunder cult may be found in the So-Alagba (Sky-gun) juju. In the present day, Ale, Amade Onhia and Igwe are commonly regarded as of independent origin; but, as will be seen later, there is ground for belief that the two latter are only different aspects of the same divinity.

As explained by the Ibo in this neighbourhood: 'Chi is our chief God. We regard her as of feminine gender, because everything was created by her. For the same reason Ale, the Earth Mother, is also looked upon as a woman, since she bears our crops and that which gives birth cannot be other than feminine.'

Our informants were unanimous in declaring: 'Chi can never do evil. She gives protection against bad jujus and

punishes wrong-doers, through that part of her power which dwells in each of her shrines.'

This local belief in the femininity of Chi is doubtless due to the influence of the Ijaw, who worship the goddess Tamuno as the supreme deity and creatrix of all. Among the Ibo outside Degama Division, however, Chi, Chuku or Chineke is regarded as a male god.

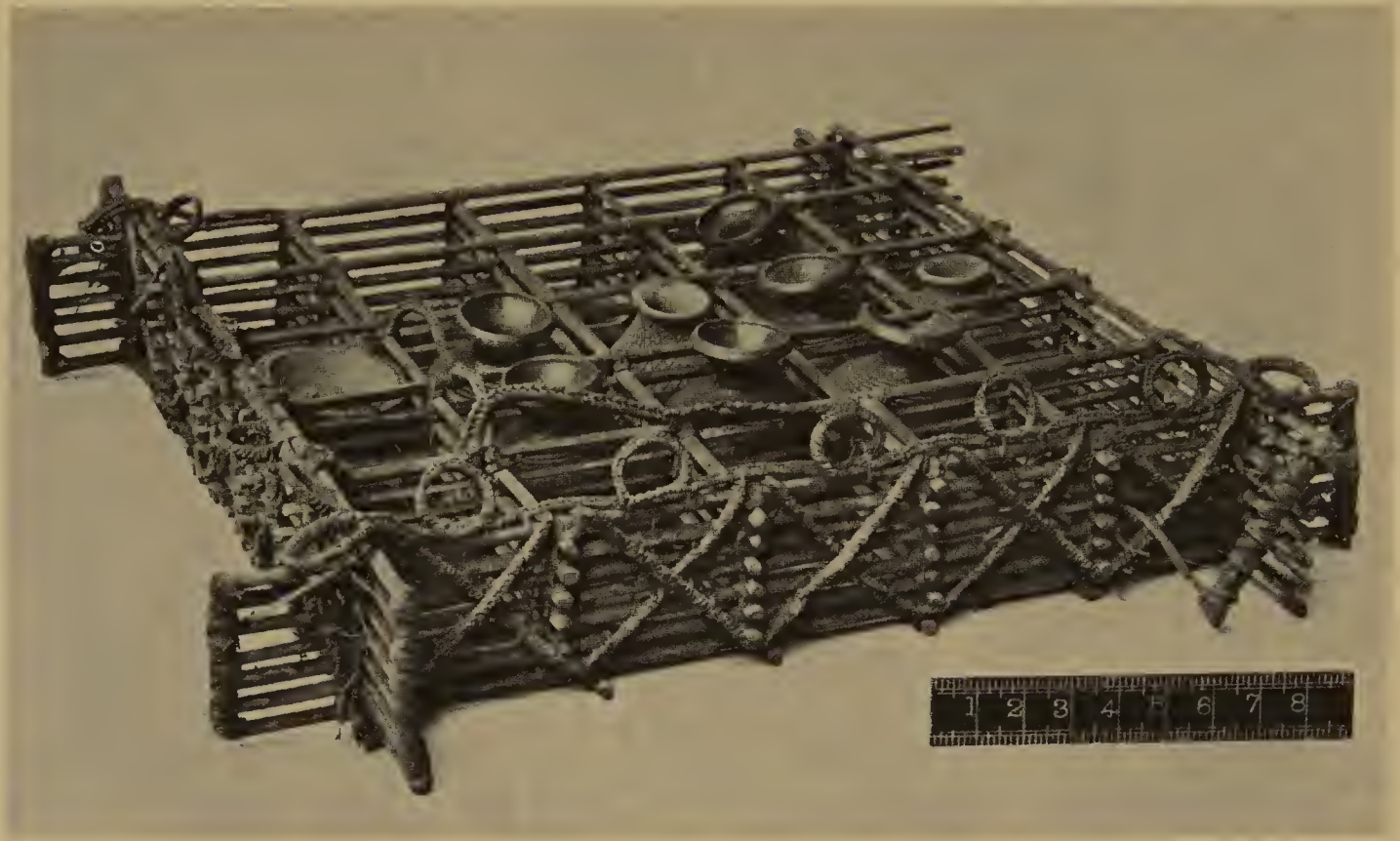
In this region also there is rarely any distinction made between Chi, the supreme deity, and her emanations, the personal Chi, which may be briefly described as the 'Over-soul,' or dominating personality in a group of human souls, The question will be found discussed at more length in 'The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,' Vol. II, ch. xv.

When a man marries and sets up housekeeping, a place is at once provided for the reception of his (personal) Chi. A woman, however, is not permitted to have her own Chi until she has borne her first babe. Members of a household, not yet entitled to a personal god, share in the protection of that of the head of the family.

Among Kalabari the Chi shrine consists of a large, flat, rectangular basket, formed of split palm-stem and divided into small square compartments, in most of which a tiny earthern bowl may be seen.[1] When it is desired to draw down a fresh emanation of the goddess for the benefit of a new member of the family, who has now qualified for a Chi of his, or her, own, a native doctor is brought to the house. On such occasions he wears a small, live chick hung from a cord round his neck and shakes rattles made from dried seed-pods. Pure water fetched from a clear spring is sprinkled around, so that all evil may be washed from the house before summoning the new emanation of the deity. In one hand the juju man holds a jar full to the brim, and, in the other, some small fish and a plantain fruit split in two. This latter is drawn over the Chi basket while the celebrant shakes his rattles and recites the following invocation :

'Behold your place set up for you ! Come settle here and look after this household, both children and men. Come,

[1] For the earliest representation of Chi among Kalabari see the folk-story on p. 63.



A CHI SHRINE. KALABARI.

facing p. 20.

take up your abode and protect the one who becomes your boy [or girl] to-day. You made this man [or woman]. Keep near him, and guard him all his life.'

The little bowl, in which the new Chi is to dwell, is then dipped into clear water, in order to purify it from the touch of its maker's hand, so that no earthly stain may cling to the place where Chi is about to take up her new abode. At the end of the ceremony, all offerings used to induce the spirit to descend are laid upon a piece of old canoe, then borne down to the river and thrown upon the water.

The Okrikans do not worship Amade Onhia or Igwe, only Tamuno (Chi) the Creatrix and Amakiri (Ale). Their (personal) Chi lives in small earthern bowls like those used by the Kalabari. When sacrifice is made to her, a fowl is taken and the head struck off. If the bird runs round dancing headless for a long time, it is taken as a sign that the offering is accepted and all rejoice; but if, on the contrary, the fowl falls down and dies quickly, it is said that the goddess rejects the sacrifice. Afterwards the meat is cooked and 'the oldest person present takes corn, yams and fowl, and makes prayer for wealth, health, children and long life; then lays the food before Tamuno.' Corn is also sprinkled around. Should a dog come inside and eat up the offering, it is looked upon as the goddess herself who has taken this form in order to come down and enjoy the sacrifice.

Among Ibo of the Isokpo clan, a larger pot or bowl, usually hung round with manillas, is used; but with these people it is set in a place by itself, not as by Kalabari in a separate division of the family Chi basket.

At Nkarahia and the surrounding country the most elaborate Chi shrines as yet met with are to be found. These consist of a room set apart for the worship of the goddess, the walls of which, both outside and in, are covered by gay-coloured plates, fixed in the clay, or decorated with elaborate patterns formed of cowries. An altar-like ridge along the rear wall usually supports the sacred emblems; while mud seats, smoothed to a pottery-like finish, bear offerings of china, glass, manillas and sometimes food. (See plate facing p. 274.)

Among Ekkpahia (Ekpaffians), Chi pots of more graceful

shape and careful modelling are to be found. These range from small vases to equally diminutive, many-handled bowls. Etche women use plain earthern basins for this purpose, about one and a half inches deep and five in diameter. These are filled with clay from which four small sticks protrude. Etche men, as well as the remaining Ibo of Degama District, instead of a pottery receptacle, erect three sticks, the central one at least half as tall again as those to right and left, all roughly notched at the head. These emblems are driven into the ground—for Etche by the ancestors' shrine, for others near the threshold of the principal room of the dwelling, beneath the Obiri shed or again, as among northern Ikwerri, in the outer yard. Offerings of manillas are always either laid near by or fastened to the sticks themselves. To this representation of their 'personal god' every Ibo man or woman kills goat or fowl at the time of the yam festival. The offering is avowedly made in thanksgiving for harvest and to entreat help and protection during the coming year.

Among the Etche, the priest of Chi, who is usually the head of the compound, gives notice that he is going to perform the ceremony. Goats and fowls, of any colour, are killed, a tortoise is impaled, and eggs, gin and tombo are offered up. The blood of the animals is sprinkled over the Chi stick. Some of the food is thrown before the juju and the rest eaten, the greater share going to the priest.

Over and over again it was explained that, when a new Chi is set up in a house, it is regarded as an additional emanation from the one great goddess. Chief Amakiri Yellow thus expressed the general idea :

'Each personal Chi has an individuality of its own, but is yet à part of, and always in communion with, the Chi of all the world, from which it can never be severed.'

By far the greatest and most important manifestation of the goddess is at Aro Chuku, *i.e.* Chi-Uku, the great Chi of the Aro. Here the most celebrated oracles are given and the most important of the myriad manifestations of Chi the Creatrix take place. An Ibo chief, who had made repeated pilgrimages to Aro Chuku, thus explained the matter :

'Chi-Uku means "goddess, the great one"; so Chuku and Chi are the same. Everyone has his own Chi; but the Aro made a huge juju at Aro Chuku which they called by this name, because in that place is to be found the greatest of all the many manifestations of Chi upon earth. A man's personal Chi is for himself alone and no one else sacrifices to it; but at Aro Chuku there is a gathering together of all the Chi forces, so at this common shrine anyone can sacrifice.'

The Aro Chuku oracle holds first place for most people of this region, as formerly throughout the whole country between the Niger and Cross Rivers. With unerring instinct for riveting their rule upon subject peoples, the Aro spread the fame of their tribal Chi, and especially of the facilities granted by her at this shrine for communication with the spirits of the dead.

Next in importance to the Aro Chuku oracle come those of Igwe at Omo-Noha in Owerri District and of Amade Onhia at Ozozo. These three settle all disputes. Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow said:

'There is no evil in any of the gods; but they are terrible to wrong-doers. For instance, when a person guilty of witchcraft was taken to Aro Chuku, the spirit caught him and either killed or enslaved him. Amade Onhia is so much feared by witch or wizard that none dare leave their houses in time of storms. Ale also slays those who have caused the death of others by evil spells.

'Should you offend your Chi by breaking her law, committing any great crime or neglecting her, she may send a sore sickness as a warning to you to mend your evil ways. In such a case a native doctor should be consulted and, after enquiring of the oracle, he usually returns some such answer as the following: "You have done such and such a thing and must therefore do so and so to gain forgiveness." Or again: "You have disgraced your Chi. She has therefore turned her eyes away from you and allows this evil thing to hurt you." All men love and trust their Chi and never fear her except when they have sinned.

'It is the personal Chi who arranges the life of each mortal. Whenever she thinks it is good to take a man

away, he dies. When Chi first creates a person she fixes how old he is to grow. At the beginning, when one is born for the first time, Chi settles for herself: "This man shall come back to earth so many times and for so long each time." Chi is always creating more people. Some of those on earth now are those created at the beginning of the world who have come back again and again; but the men of the present day do not live as long as the first men used to do. The old people too were taller than those of the present day and much stronger.'

In connection with the worship of Amade Onhia a somewhat interesting point came to light—namely that, at his festivals, a ram must be offered in sacrifice. According to Frobenius: 'The tribes dwelling in the region of the Niger and its delta, stretching far towards Senegambia, are thoroughly familiar with the Ram-God as the Deity of the weather. Among those inhabiting the East far from the Niger—namely Haussa—and Benue land, a slight change in the conception of the divine ram has taken place, with a distinct tendency to transform the Storm God to a Sun God.'

Dr. Frobenius then refers to the Ram-headed God Ammon, supposed to have come from Siwa, the oasis, into Egypt; to the legend of Zeus manifesting himself to Heracles wrapt in the fleece and masked by the head of a ram; to El Bekri's account of ram-worship in the region of Sus and to Dr. Bertholon's discovery, among the relics of pre-Carthaginian religions in Tunis, of the ram as chief divinity.

Among the semi-Bantu Ekoi of the Oban District, to the south-west of the Cameroons, thunder is said to be caused by a great ram 'which runs up and down in the heavens, stamping with his feet and filling the sky with his terrible voice.'[1] Ibo, as already mentioned, slay a ram in sacrifice at the principal festivals of Amade Onhia, and an image of one of these beasts, modelled with unusual skill and care, is often to be found in shrines raised in the Thunder God's honour. In one case, though the exigencies of material caused the rendering of the body to be somewhat primitive, the treatment of the head was so fine and spirited that it

[1] Cf. *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 73.

might have served for the clay model of an old Greek bronze. At Obokohia a ram's head in *cire perdu* was obtained. This was said to be very ancient and appeared to be regarded as one of the most treasured objects of the Thunder God's cult. One man indeed stated that, in olden times, Amade Onhia used to appear under this form to favoured worshippers. So far the statement stands without confirmation ; but the bronze head was an object of peculiar veneration, and may now be seen at the British Museum.

Another link with the ancient belief that the ram was a personification of the sun may perhaps be found in the Kalabari practice of offering a white ram, every alternate seven years, to the Sea God Obazi. At the beginning of the sacrificial cycle a human being, who must be pale of skin, was always offered up, so that the mouth of the principal rivers might not silt up and prevent trading vessels from entering the estuary. After an interval of seven years a white ram, together with white fowls, was sacrificed, and this offering was repeated whenever the bar threatened to increase and impede trade. When the reason for the choice of a *white ram* for this purpose was asked, the chief in question replied :

'I know only that such was the law handed down from our forefathers ; but I once heard that it was connected with the sinking of the sun into the sea every night. These are, however, matters of far-off times, and we have long ago forgotten the precise cause for which they were ordered.'

The general belief is that, while Chi bore the chief gods and created man and beasts, the Earth Goddess Ale, sole daughter of the great Creatrix, made the ground and the vegetable kingdom. Though Chi is recognised as excelling all others in power, she is yet regarded as somewhat vague and far off, while Ale enters more nearly into the lives and hearts of the people. As explained by the head chief of Ogbokoro :

'Ale is our Mother and our God. Most things that we have come from her, and without her gifts we should be lost indeed.'

The story of the coming of Ale was thus told by an Ibo, half Aro half Awka, named Obi Amara :

' There is a big bird in our bush called Ogbu-ghu, known to most Ibo and Kalabari as Akama-akama or Okpoa [the hornbill]. The mother of this bird died. In those days, Ale was not ; so Ogbu-ghu could find no place to bury his dead. Long time he flew up and down, bearing the body on his back. Then he thought : " My old mother ! No place to bury her ! " Therefore he made her a grave upon his own head. That is why this bird has a mound upon his head to this day.'

So far, the story, with varying names, is common throughout the Division. The rest was only heard from one other source :

' After awhile, as Ogbu-ghu flew over the water seeking a resting-place, but finding none, he saw one fine woman and one man, both big too much, swimming in the water. He watched and saw that they were making something. Not much long before land began to appear. When this had grown quite a big land, Ale cried : " When any man dies, let him be buried here." Her own body she stretched over the land. She it is who made all, both the earth itself and the crops. When the dead are buried they turn to earth. That is why our people say : " We are of one skin with Ale."

' Trees too she brought ; Ojji tree [the Iroko, *Chlorophora excelsa*] was the first. The second was Akpo [the silk cotton tree, *Bombax giganteus*], and the third Odala [Khaya mahogany]. It is to this one that a woman prays and sacrifices when she wants piccan. Next, Ale brought the Kola tree, also named Ojji, the fruit of which is set out for ghost offerings.

' Ale is the mother of all Ibo people, though their souls come from Chi. Often big stones are sent by Amade Onhia to strike tall trees like Ojji. When one of these is cut down, such a stone is almost always found inside.'

As related on page 69, it is strictly forbidden to quarrel, or use violence of any kind, during the sacred month of Ale ; for should this rule be disregarded, the Earth Mother will be displeased and not let the crops grow well.

AN IBO DOOR.

CLAY IMAGE OF ALE, THE EARTH GODDESS, IN AN IBO MBARI HOUSE.

facing p. 26.

Just as Chi, the Creatrix one and indivisible, yet sends down distinct emanations of herself to protect those entitled to a personal Chi, so Ale, after having made the whole earth, extends special protection to each of the many tribes settled upon her surface. This is said to be done by means of the particular emanation dwelling within each local shrine. The people were unanimous in stating : ' There are not many Ales but one alone. All those worshipped among different nations are but parts of the one great goddess.' Yet, should two peoples be at war, the Ale of the one lies in wait and inflicts injury dire, mysterious and inevitable upon any of hostile race who might dare to set foot upon the earth she guards. To give an example :

During the late Okrikan-Kalabari ' war,' concerning fishing rights, which broke out afresh in the autumn of 1914, one of the chief native officials, a pillar of the Kalabari church and a man of unusual intelligence and enlightenment, accompanied us to Okrika on several occasions. Each time he begged permission to sleep on board the launch, or even in a canoe, rather than in the comfortable house provided for him within the Government enclosure. He gave as a reason that all the earth round about was ' enemy ground,' and that Elechu [1] would certainly punish him did he trust his body thereon during sleep. Yet he was no less confident in asserting : ' There is only one Ale ; but that part of her which guards Okrikan soil would be angry were I, who am of a race at war with this people, to come at night time and sleep upon their earth.'

Closely linked with the worship of Ale are innumerable yam cults and that of the Corn Spirit.[2] At the clearing of new farms, and again at harvest time, most Ibo chiefs offer a goat in sacrifice to the land. Ale gives help for crops and protects the farm folk ; but offerings should also be made to the genius of each separate plot as well as to the Ajokko-Ji —the Yam Spirit,[2] who is supposed to enter into the greatest yam grown on each farm during the year. This sacred tuber

[1] Or Eletu, the name of the square where the sacred shrine stands. The real name of the local Ale is ' Ama-kiri ' (' the place or land of the town ').

[2] For further information see *Some Nigerian Fertility Cults*.

is set aside, and upon it blood is always thrown when a sacrifice is slain for the farm spirit. Should a man find that he has more yams at one harvest than in former years, he makes a special offering in gratitude, 'because the farm is increasing and doing good to him. This King Yam is kept for the whole year until after the digging of next season's crops. In these days people sometimes steal yams from the Obba [racks in which the yams are stored]. Formerly this was never done for fear of the yam juju.'

Among Mbolli the chief god is Obari, the Creator. In the words of Chief Igwe of Ogali :

'We also worship Ala, whom we call Nkike. She it is who gives us prosperity. We are farmers, raising crops. These grow up and increase. Out of the money thus gained we marry wives. The wives bear children to us. These also live upon the earth, fed by the gifts of the Earth Goddess.

'Aa and Mbiencha are the children of Nkike, therefore we worship them also and pray to them for the same things, namely crops, children, herds and general prosperity. They live in great trees—Aa in the bush and Mbiencha by our big market-place.'

Among Abuan, according to the testimony of Chief Ovie of Okobaw and the head-men of his town, the principal deities are Ake-Ema, the Sky God ; Ade, the Earth Goddess ; and Obukele (or Obukere), the Spirit of Fertility. Later, Chief Oku of Amalem—priest-king of the tribe, whose forbears have held this office for at least ten generations and who is, according to legend, descended from Abua, the founder of the race—together with Chief Amiofori of Otari, the secular king, gave the following information, alternately relating and checking one another's statements :

'Ake is the principal god of our people. Chief Oku is his representative on earth and is called Ake Abua. The great drum, which may only be beaten at the time of yam planting [about February], is named Okama Ake Abua. On succeeding his father, each priest of this juju must make a new drum, which is kept in his own house as long as he lives and only borne to the Okama hut before the carrying out of the

AN ABUAN WOMAN

facing p. 28.

great ceremonies. There they are beaten to call our people for the festival of new yam planting.'

Within this shed the drums of former priest-kings stand side by side, hung round with strips of white cloth, until after many years they fall to pieces and the fragments are at length swept away. At the time of our visit Chief Oku's drum was carried thither and set in the foreground (see Fig. 2, p. 31), while those of his father Ogida and grandfather Igiguru, both as yet in a perfect state of preservation, stood on the left, a little to the rear. To continue the chiefs' account :

' At the time of new yam planting each town brings one bottle of gin to the Ake-Abua and all our people gather together for the principal ceremony of the year. They go to a place called Eru Ogbokko, which is the spot where Agana, the first of the priest-king's house, was born and also where he lies buried together with his parents Abua and Egule. Before planting yams, sacrifice must be made to him, asking him to let the crops come good and send plenty piccans, yams and kids to his people. We also beg that he will keep sickness away from our towns and protect us well.

' We pray to Agana because he was the first man to come out of the ground. Abua was the first of all men to settle on earth and he conceived Agana as his first-born ; therefore we worship the latter as a god because he was the first to come out of this ground. Egule was the wife of Abua. These two came down by a rope from Heaven, sent by the chief god Ake. They were the first human beings to appear upon earth, though animals were already there.

' Abuan was the name of our people as English is that of your countrymen. Ade Abuan is the name of our land. Ade means " ground," the same as the Ibo Ale.

' After Agana, Abua and Egule bore Otaba, then Amogan, and last Akpede. Otaba was very fond of fish, so he settled near the water and formed four towns, Digiriga, Emelesue, Serabia and Ogbokuma. Amogan was a hunter and therefore made his home in the bush country, where he built nine towns in Owerewere part, namely Okobaw, Emabu, Obaran, Emesu, Agonowan, Amani-Gbokko, Owerewere and two

others, which we forget for the moment. Akpede was a doctor, and liked to be where big trees are, so that he could make medicines from their roots, bark and leaves. His children built the town which bears his name, and also Ogbema-Kako, Iyak, Emaw, Egbulum, Eluk and Eerom.

'Ake is a male god who created everything. Beside him there is no other big god in our country. Women, it is true, worship Egule, because she is the mother of the race; but beside Ake men only worship Abua and Agana.

'When Egule walked upon earth, she wore her head-cloth folded in the same manner as our women do to-day. This is done in memory of her and to show that all Abuan women are her daughters.

'Arugu-Ama is a play made after sacrifice has been offered at new yam planting. In olden times the priest-king never left his house except at this season or to judge important cases, such as murder, in the market-place. Before judgment was given the chiefs used to send to him, saying: "We think such or such a punishment should be inflicted. Shall we settle it by ourselves or will you come to give judgment?"

'In former days many tabus were laid upon an Ake-Abua. He could not buy land from anybody. He might never sell land, nor take anything by force from one of his people. He might not eat coco-yam, banana or electric fish. He might never taste chop cooked by a woman at monthly periods nor have connection with such a woman. He might make no sacrifice to Ake without first informing all Abuan. Should the king sin against any law, all people must suffer because of it. That is why he was kept so holy. Common people mostly have their farms to attend to and therefore cannot trouble to think about tabus such as those imposed upon the priest-king. That is the reason they can eat food cooked by their wives at any time and there is no restriction as to intercourse. It was for this cause that our people chose an Ake-Abua, that he might be holy on their behalf, keeping all the laws which ordinary people have not time to remember because of their everyday work. One tabu, however, holds for all our nation, just as with Kalabar—*i.e.* no man may have connection with a woman lying upon the ground; but

our women may seat themselves upon it at all times and need not first seek stool or tree-trunk as is the law of some other peoples.

'There are strong jujus in our land, but it is Ake who gave them their power. There are no Ibudu here, except a few copied from Ibo by foolish people in hopes that they will thus get blessing.

'Just outside Abua town is a place where big trees grow. There Abua, Egule and Agana lie buried and all our people go to make sacrifice to Ake. When it is time for the ceremony, people come in from even the farthest towns. This is our yearly festival; but, should a man fall sick or a pregnant woman find childbirth hard, they can pour out libations to Ake in their own houses, calling for help.'

FIG. 2.—Abuan Sacred Drum. (See p. 29.)

CHAPTER III

Water Spirits

Next to the gods come, both for Kalabari and Ibo, those minor deities, or godlings, known throughout the West Coast of Africa as jujus.[1] Among Kalabari these are clearly divided into two categories, ' Owu Amapo ' or water spirits and ' Oru ' or land spirits. A somewhat similar belief is held by Ibo, though with them the first named are only worshipped in connection with special sacred waters such as the Otaminni River, or the dwelling-place of the terrible water-wife Wainya Wala-Dala, said to live beneath a certain water in Awka District. For Kalabari, on the contrary, almost every creek and stream is peopled by water spirits.

Owu Amapo are powerful, and mostly beneficent, genii, much like the Ibibio ' Ndemm,' dwelling in river, pool and spring. Some, however, are malignant and resemble the Ibibio ' Mbiam ' in their dealings, overturning canoes, especially those of men against whom their aid had been invoked. When, for instance, people ' beat drum, calling upon the name of Akuku, who lives in the Sombreiro River just opposite Degama Station, should the man, against whom his help has been asked, not succeed in agreeing with his adversary quickly and inducing the latter to revoke the juju, Akuku will surely punish him. It is said that those Owu to whom offerings are made and in whose honour plays are given always protect their worshippers.'

Speaking on the subject of water spirits, Chief Quaker Bob Manuel of Abonnema said : ' The Owu were made by

[1] Some of the beings or forces included here under this name would now be classified by me as ' medicines ' or charms. For a fuller definition and description see *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. II, p. 153 *et seq.*

Tamuno [Chi] in the beginning of all things, before men were made. Some people indeed believe that we are descended from them ; but, for my part, I think that Chi made each separately—the first to live in the water and the others on land.

'Many Owu have bodies joined down to the knees, from which point their feet spring. They have no proper legs and are pale of face and body, much like white men. Sometimes they come up from the water and seize a canoe ; then drive out all people and themselves climb in.'

The following story of the ways of the water-folk was told us by Mrs. Martha Amakiri Yellow and her little son Alex, a boy of about ten years old :

'Beside the gods, men of our nation also worship nature spirits called Owu Amap'. This name is given to all strange creatures which live in the water. Even the very big fish are so called, because they seem to us powerful and wonderful above the common.

'Sometimes the spirits come to the surface of the Sombreiro River and play all about ; but, when they see a canoe drawing near, dive down again to their homes beneath the water. Many Owu are said to look like men, but their faces, hands and feet are different from ours. Sometimes they have two heads, one looking before and the other behind ; sometimes only one, while their feet and hands are quite flat and webbed like those of a duck. So at least it is said. I never met one myself.

'There is also a kind called Gbasa, only seen at night-time, the faces of which shine like a lamp. These rise and float upon the waters of the river, and are quite different to the lights seen after dark in the mangrove swamps, which are caused by the shining of stones, one of which every full-grown alligator bears in its head, and which glow like lamps when the beasts go out to feed at night.

'Owu can take all sorts of strange shapes. Some are as big as a puncheon, others look just like an earthen pot, others again like an iron cauldron ; but all float easily upon the water. A man may chance to meet such spirits suddenly when on his way to any place, and even, now and again, a

fisher is said to have caught one in his net. Such a thing happened last March to a member of Standfast Jack's house at Abonnema. The man threw his casting net and drew it up with a strange thing inside. This resembled a girl baby sitting on a stool. Full of fear he cast it back and threw again—three times in all—but each time the Owu Amap' was found in the net.

'When the fisherman saw that he could not rid himself of this, he took up the net and bore it to the Oru-Kuru-Gbaw [*i.e.* juju-inspired person—a kind of Pythoness] Igoniko, who is sister to Francis Briggs. The priestess could not prophesy as usual on this occasion, so she went to a native doctor and asked the meaning of the strange thing. When he had questioned the oracle, he replied that some time ago she herself had quarrelled with her human husband, on which the latter flogged her and she left him in anger. After that her soul went down to her Owu husband beneath the water. The strange catch, therefore, was part of her own soul, reborn in the form of a water baby, which tried to come back and was snared in the fisherman's net.'

When the people of Abonnema heard this, all flocked to see the sight, among them little Alex Yellow, who said :

'All people were running, so I ran with them to see the Owu Amap'. Never before had I seen such a thing ! It was just like a little girl piccan, white as if cut out of chalk ; but with hair black and curly-looking, not short and close like that of our people. It neither moved nor cried, but did not look at all like a dead child or anything I have ever seen. The stool on which it sat looked like wood-work, painted different colours. This was not separate, but joined on, as if fastened to the body of the baby. Afterwards the people feared too much ; so the Owu Amap' was flung back again into the water.'

Mrs. Yellow said further :

'At Bakana all nations make juju when anything remarkable is seen in the river ; for it is thought that the sight may be one or other of the genii become visible to our eyes.

'By a little town called Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama ["single persons' town"] near Ke, on the left of the Sombreiro River, there is

a sacred pool or lake, the water of which is said to shine at night as if many lamps were lighted beneath. There, every eighth day, the spirits hold festival. They beat drum and ring bell, while a cock can be heard crowing beneath the water.

'Near to this place is one of the homes of the great Adumu, father and chief of the Owu. The country all round is juju. If man or woman cannot get piccan, they go to Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama and pray to Adum' to send them a babe. No man may throw anything upon the ground in that place, nor beat stick upon it, nor set down anything ungently, lest, by so doing, Ale, the Earth Goddess, might be hurt. This is a very strong rule in the town.

'All in that place are followers of Adum'. If you are sick and go there for healing, help will be given. The land thereabouts belongs to us Kalabari. There are many snakes in that country which live in the water, but often come up into the houses, mostly for night-time. No one drives them away, even when they creep into beds and sleep by a person's side. They never chop men, so the townsfolk give them gladly the food which they come to fetch. They are iridescent, changing to a different colour while you watch—blue like the rim of that plate [a Worcester china one with deep blue edge] or green like the leaves. Such an one I saw when there, about as thick as a man's wrist and over two yards long.

'When people see a serpent entering their house, they call: "Here is Adum's son." Then all run to see him. Pythons also are never killed here, for they too are looked upon as the children of Adum'. Nowadays Christians kill them sometimes, but juju people never do so. Always they bring blessing when they creep into bed and sleep by the side of man or woman. Should the priests find a python lying dead, they give it burial, just like a Chief.'

Months after hearing this account we visited Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama. The shrine of Adumu faces the sacred water, its entrance arched over by creepers, beneath which a short, sandy track leads down to the shore. Tall Mimbo-palms spread protecting arms overhead, while below, in the cool

shadow, sweet-scented water-lilies raise their white petals and hearts of gold above a carpet of level leaves, emerald, copper-tinted or deep red in tone. Here and there the dark, clear surface is flecked with azure, where broken reflections from the cloudless sky have somehow forced a way through the screening palms.

The sacred spot is approached by two paths, one broad, straight and smooth, leading to the front of the shrine which faces the juju water ; the other, a mere bush-track, branching off some hundred feet or so away and crossed and recrossed by gnarled and knotted roots. The first is the road for male worshippers, the second that for women ! Even by this humble path, however, the latter may not draw very near ; but must stay their steps at a place marked off, where a three-sided ' bush-seat ' has been set for their use. From this point they can see the wall of the shrine but may not cast so much as a glance within.

It is forbidden for women of the region to mention Adum'. Only men may talk of him ; for with his cult some of the most important of the male secrets are said to be connected. The mysteries of Adum' may only be carried out by a priest, and possibly the reason that women are forbidden to approach the shrine or witness the rites is that certain phallic ceremonies are there performed.

Within a dark little chamber to the rear of the building a piece of carved wood, set upon posts and showing a rude representation of an old Portuguese ' two-master,' forms a sort of arch before the holy of holies. From this hangs a long curtain of white cloth, shutting off the most sacred of the cult objects from the sight of all save the priest. In front a low phallic pillar may be seen, of the same type as the Nduen Fobara in ancestral shrines. (See Fig. 1, p. 18.)

From the women of Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama we learned that not only may lights be seen gleaming beneath the surface of the sacred water, but, at times, the whole of the swamp glows with a light so bright that it rises above the encircling palms and is seen shining with a steady brilliance, ' very beautiful and wonderful,' by those who glance from door or window of the little town. At such times, too, faery cocks come up

and crow in the surrounding bush with a sound very 'glad and shrill.'

Within the town is a shrine raised in honour of Biaro, the eldest daughter of Adum'. This is small and humble compared to that of her sire, and forms part of the house of the priestess Iyai. The latter pours libations and cooks chop for the Owu, but cannot prophesy like most of the women set apart for the service of water spirits. Unlike them also, the pythic frenzy never descends upon her, causing her to dance.

Concerning the arrival of Biaro, we were told as follows by the women :

' One day the new Owu came up out of the water and announced to our forbears : " My father Adumu is great and powerful. Therefore I wish all men to acknowledge me as his daughter ! " That is the reason a shrine was built for her in our town.'

Later, we visited the chief centre of the cult of Adumu. An hour before sunset, one Sunday afternoon in June 1915, we landed on the little beach at Adum'-Ama (Adum's town) on the bank of the Adum'-Ama Bokko, a tributary of the Santa Barbara. There we were welcomed by the priest of the cult, an old man, tall and rather ragged, but with gentle manners and friendly air, who led us straight to the shrine. On the way he told us that we were the first white men to land upon this sacred ground, though once, long years before, about the time when Europeans first came to these regions, some wanderers had lost their way and drifted thither ; but these only asked help and went on, as swiftly as might be, without setting foot upon the enchanted shore. The priest's account ran, roughly translated, as follows :

' Adum'-Ama is the home of the great juju Adumu. He is the father of all Owu. Often he shows himself in the shape of a great snake, but when he goes out fishing in his canoe at night he takes the form of a man. At such times his wife Ngoji sits at the stern, steering. There is a sign by which they may be known. Adum' always places his throwing spear on the left hand or carries it against his left shoulder,

while human beings have theirs on the right ; otherwise the couple look just like ordinary fisher-folk and go up and down, watching the ways of men and their dealings with the water people.'

On such occasions Ngoji bears the catch for her husband, and indeed appears to be gentle and serviceable. It is a curious fact, vouched for by the many fowls to be seen on this small strip of land, that the snakes, called by the natives ' children of Adum',' not only do not hurt the people themselves but seemingly never even touch their poultry. The account already given concerning his progeny at Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama applies in every detail to those who live round Adum'-Ama.

When one remembers the number of Portuguese mariners who, in old days, made their way to this part of the coast, it is not difficult to understand why the carved figure of Adumu is here shown with the pointed moustache and beard, the ruff and feather-trimmed hat of a don of the period when these bold seafarers first penetrated to the lower regions of the Santa Barbara. The fish, which hangs from beneath the ruff, and the two snakes, coiled panier-wise on either side, are obviously symbolic of his attributes.

Kala Adumu (Small, or Lesser, Adumu), the eldest son of the great water spirit, has his shrine beyond a beach of firm yellow sand, at the mouth of the river. Here again the ruff is clearly to be seen, though in a more modified form, while only a single snake adorns his image.

It is to the chief shrine at Adum'-Ama that every priestess must come to undergo ' ordination ' before venturing to enter upon the office of Oru-Kuru-Gbaw. To the right of the principal shrine stands a small shed containing the carved post called ' Nunuma.' This is said to represent the ' dancing frenzy ' of Adumu. The whirlings of the dance are typified by the loops of the central snake. It is the spirit of the sacred serpent which is said to enter the head of the pythoness and cause her to gyrate in the mystic dance which always precedes the utterance of oracles.

These strange women, known at Brass as Oru-Koro-Gbaw and at Warri as Oru-Koro-Eyawrogbaw, hold a position of

THE NUNUMA AND OTHER CEREMONIAL OBJECTS IN THE SHRINE OF THE PRIESTESS AT AIYA ABISSA.

THE FIGURE OF ADUMU AT ADUM'AMA.

facing p. 38.

greater importance among the Kalabari perhaps than among other Ijaw. In olden days the chiefs used to come to them for advice, and only by their counsel, supposed to be inspired, was any grave step taken. There is a tradition that, until comparatively recent years, no human husband was permitted to any of these priestesses, since they were looked upon as wedded to one of the sacred serpents. Now they are allowed to take an earthly spouse in addition to this supernatural one ; but, should any yield to the advances of another wooer, her good name would be lost for ever. Not for her the chance of concealment possible to women of lesser importance : 'for, in such shameful case, the spirit husband enters within her head and forces her to tell out her sin before all the townsfolk.'

Sometimes during her sacred dance an Oru-Kuru-Gbaw will go up to girl or woman among the onlookers and say : 'As I am, so will you be.' At other times one of the by-standers may begin to move or dance strangely. Then the people know that inspiration has fallen upon her also.

Before the Owu enters an Oru-Kuru-Gbaw he is asked what things are forbidden. Should a woman so possessed wish to free herself from this influence, she breaks one of the tabu, whereon the spirit goes away. There are a few men possessed by Owu, one at Ifawkaw near Bakana and one at Ifawkaw near Buguma—both inspired by Amanin-Giu.

The water spirit is said always to visit his earth bride every eighth day on the evening of Fene-Bene. Therefore all priestesses keep themselves holy on that day, sleeping alone, never leaving the house after dark and pouring libations before the shrine of the serpent. On the eve of an Owu play, not priestesses alone, but all women in the town, are forbidden to permit the approach of their husbands. No dog may enter the dwelling of an Oru-Kuru-Gbaw.

Each of the chief Kalabari families has a special pythoness, whose office can only be filled by a woman of the House. Inspiration may fall suddenly upon a maiden, whereon she will run forth among the townsfolk, proclaiming that she has been chosen as the bride of a certain Owu. For instance,

according to the testimony of Chief Obenibo : 'A year or two ago the Oru-Kuru-Gbaw, called Amanin-Giu-Ta, of Abonnema, ran out among the people, crying that she had just been wedded by the Ifawkaw juju Amanin-Giu [hence the name by which she is now known]. In olden days the spirit of such a woman used often to go down into the water for the space of seven days, after which she usually returned to her own people. When the serpent husband comes up to visit his wife he is invisible to ordinary eyes, but the priestess herself can see and talk with him in his shrine. All Oru-Kuru-Gbaw must make sacrifice to the water spirits whenever they pass over creek or stream which is sacred to these.'

There are several such priestesses attached to the service of the dominant Kalabari juju, Awome-Ka-So—herself a woman spirit who came up out of the sea. One of these pythias tends the shrine at Bakana, one at Buguma, and a third at Abonnema. The first is named Dakuru, the second Nwu, and the third Odokkaba. None may look upon a corpse, nor take part in mourning for the dead. Should their eyes by chance fall upon a dead body, they must perform ceremonies to purify themselves before entering the presence of Awome-Ka-So.

It is also forbidden for any Oru-Kuru-Gbaw to shed tears. Should one of the prohibited things happen, they must pluck leaves from the Odumdum tree (Dolichandrone) and, after waving these round them, pour out rum and sacrifice a fowl to their spirit husband, as well as slay a goat to obtain pardon from their mistress, the great juju, should they be among those attached to her service.

When this goddess wishes to speak to the townsmen, she always does so through the mouth of one or other of these priestesses. A priest is also attached to each of her shrines, but his duty is only to pour libations and guard the cult objects. No oracle is ever given through him.

Within the Owu shrine at Dakuru's house we found two carved staves, one entwined by a climbing serpent and the other surmounted by a human face towards which a snake appeared to be climbing. On a carved pedestal stood a

cone-shaped piece of pottery, also surmounted by a roughly modelled head. These two faces are said to represent the merman husband.

In the shrine of another Bakana pythoness, Gege-Ba Agbani, still more elaborately carved staves were found. It is with one of these in hand that the priestess dances when inspiration enters her. So soon as the coming of her spirit spouse is felt, she ceases to take nourishment and goes forth to announce that 'juju has come to her head.' Women friends gather round at the news and draw leaf-like patterns in white chalk over her face. She dances at intervals for a period of three to seven days, during which time she may take neither food nor drink—not even so much as a drop of water—nor may she relieve nature. The sight of her sacred dance is tabu to any pregnant woman, though maids are not debarred from seeing it. This prohibition seems to have originated from the idea that, once the forces of fertility have begun their work, it would be dangerous to submit a woman to further fecundative influences, since this might possibly overhasten matters and bring about premature birth. Such an event is here regarded as most ill-omened, and the unfortunate offspring is doomed to death.

When one of these priestesses is approached with a request that she will consult the oracle, she enters into her shrine and remains there fasting, in order to draw to her the spirit of her supernatural spouse. So soon as inspiration approaches, she falls into a trance, during which she can sing, dance and answer any question. Before announcing the oracle, however, she usually shakes rattles and calls upon the personal Chi of the applicant. Matters concerning the whole town are arranged according to her advice, but given, in this case, not as the mouthpiece of the water spirit, but of the dominant juju Awome-Ka-So.

Anyone who is troubled with evil spirits and wishes to ask a pythoness to make propitiatory sacrifices must lay before her two manillas, some eggs, plantains and a small live chicken. Sometimes rice and meat, or a dog's head, are also brought. The priestess takes the articles and lays them by the water-side at a spot called Agbabu, praying that the evil

which is following her client may come and take the sacrifice and not trouble her any more.

From several sources we learned that, in olden days, men were occasionally wedded to mermaids and that these fairy brides brought with them the gift of prophecy. Babes born to such couples are said to have grown up strong and fortunate beyond those of merely mortal parentage. It was regretfully added that nowadays mer-folk have grown less free in their intercourse with human beings. Some sceptical souls indeed even go so far as to say that they do not believe in 'fairy brides,' since they have never seen a single one! All, however, agreed quite seriously in stating that the matter of the pythonesses' mermen spouses stood on an entirely different footing. Were not the women themselves living to vouch for the existence of these? And should not a wife be the best authority on matters concerning her husband?

When a woman is about to bear a babe, she usually goes to the Oru-Kuru-Gbaw and begs her to pray to the Owu that it may become a strong and fine child. Mothers, too, whose babes have died in infancy, go to these women, promising that, if their next piccan be granted strength to live, it shall be devoted to the service of the juju. 'This is the reason why many children live with the Oru-Kuru-Gbaw, working for her until they are grown up. Sick people, too, both men and women, go to her house and dwell there, paying many manillas, in the hope that their illness may be cured by the power of the sacred serpent.' The bronze bracelets of the priestesses are sometimes ordered by native doctors to be worn by those threatened with illness or evil influences.

As already mentioned, it is a matter of general belief that Owu are withdrawing themselves more and more from intercourse with earth folk, and that even water babies seldom come up to play on the beaches nowadays. At an old, old town near Kula, we were told, they still come at times to dance in a little sandy cove, and, when weary with play, sit resting on stools of carved stone, made by no mortal hands but wrought by the gods at the beginning of the world. Mr. A. K. B. Manuel, one of the most intelligent of the native

officials, assured us that he had seen these as a child, when visiting his grandmother at Aiya Abissa, and that the stools were ' of all shapes, round, oval, square or diamond—carved by the gods in patterns of snakes and other ornaments, such as those with which native people decorate the shrines of their jujus.'

Aiya Abissa itself is a very old town, as is shown by the depth of shells from ancient kitchen-middens left bare by the falling tide. It was, therefore, in hope of archaeological discoveries that we set out in search of these sculptured stones.

Down the broad creek we shot, propelled by some twenty paddlers, in the wake of the little canoe which went before to show the way ; for the whereabouts of the water babies' playground is known to few. At the point where the great creek forks into two lesser ones stands a little hut, draped with white cloth—such as fishermen build here and there amid the mangrove, to coax the spirits into sending them plentiful catches. Here we followed the right-hand branch and soon entered a narrowing water-way, all but overarched by darkling mangrove boughs.

The gay songs of the paddlers changed almost imperceptibly, taking on a graver note which merged, at length, into a kind of Gregorian chant, indescribably solemn and impressive. Little white-fronted monkeys showed now and again amid the branches—shadows from out the shadows—fitting denizens of these uncanny solitudes, whence never a bird's voice sounded nor wings cleft the air.

Before our destination was reached, silence had fallen on all, broken only by the rhythmic beat of the paddles, the drip of water from their pointed blades, or the raucous, far-off cry of some bush beast.

Above the landing-place stands a small settlement of fisher huts, inhabited by the guardian of the sacred stones with his family. Under his leadership we passed, through corn and plantains, to the edge of the swamp which the water babies are said to favour. Fortunately the tide was low and we walked almost dry-shod over the sandy floor, till at length the chief parted a screen of boughs jutting out from the shore

and revealed a little beach ringed round with bush. This was the water babies' playing-place.

There, in the midst, stood the famous stones. Alas for visions of archaeological treasure trove! Our dreams of Phoenician or Carthaginian sculpture resolved themselves, prosaically enough, into a mass of sandstone rising out of the floor. The softer veins, washed by the ebb and flow of the tide, had left separate blocks, roughly round, oval, square or diamond-shaped, as our informant had described. Each was surrounded by circle upon circle of wave-like rings, worn in the course of centuries by the continual lap-lap of the rising and falling water. Such, to the prosaic eyes of white men, were the 'snake-like ornaments carved by no mortal hand'!

In spite of disillusionment, the place was not without a charm of its own, and it was easy enough to follow the rise and growth of the legend in primitive minds. Stone itself is so rare in these regions that, as among Ibibio, it holds all the elements of the uncanny, while the stool-shaped blocks, with their waved edges, were ground enough for evolving the story of some fairy user. Thus, little by little, the pretty legend of the water babies' dance grew up to spread its mysterious glamour round the neighbouring beach, bush and waters. Here, too, we were told that the mer-folk are less often seen than formerly; chiefly because men have broken the law that little children may not be brought to the playing-places of the water fairies.

It is said that originally most of the water spirits came up from the sea. 'They have houses under the water and live just like we do, bearing piccans and dying like us; only their lives are longer than ours. Mer-folk talk to one another, but human beings cannot understand their speech.'

In the club-house at Buguma a considerable number of gorgeously decorated, carved wooden masks and head-dresses are to be found, said to represent mermaids who have been seen at different times playing on the shore. One of the chiefs explained that when mer-folk show themselves thus to mortals it is a sure sign of something about to happen to the town. Each time they are seen, the man to whom the

GEGE-BA AGBANI

(See p. 41.)

THE PYTHONESS OF AIYA ABISSA.

(See p. 43.)

wonderful sight has been vouchsafed comes home and carves an effigy, which he offers up in one of the club-houses as a memorial of the occasion. (See also p. 309 *et seq.*)

When a man wishes to visit the country of the Owu, he puts round his neck a small shell, called Ogonyi or Igoyi by Okrikans and Ogonyaw by Kalabari. His spirit then leaves his body and goes down to the country of the water-folk, whence he returns and teaches his friends their ceremonies and dances.

Occasionally also, it is said, fishermen catch sight of the Owu, who in their haste to go sometimes leave their head-dresses behind them.

All were unanimous in explaining that mermen are quite different from manatees (Emei), with which, by the way, natives hereabouts are well acquainted.

'When a strong breeze blows, forming a whirlwind, that is thought to be made by the genii coming up from the water. Nemeno Owu is the name given to this wind. Also, in the dry season, when the dust swirls round, this is said to be caused by the breath of the Owu.

'In Suku-Fene creek [at the mouth of the New Calabar River] there is a huge python. Chickens, rams and goats are offered to it. In olden days, the juju Abazi often called for victims. When the mouth of a river was shut off by a bar, our forefathers used to go to the Long Juju at Aro Chuku to ask what must be done. In answer, the oracle announced that a richly dressed man or woman should be sacrificed on the sand-bank. This was done for the New Calabar River. The reason the Okrikans are quite shut in and have no seashore at all, is because they did not sacrifice properly.'

This custom of sacrifice to the sea juju, which was common throughout the Bight of Benin, was often witnessed in this neighbourhood by Europeans. According to Captain Crow (*c.* 1800), 'It was the custom there [at Bonny] once in seven years to sacrifice a virgin, of fifteen or sixteen years of age, as a propitiatory offering to Boreas the god of the North Wind. For some weeks previous to the sacrifice the female selected is led through the town. Everything fancied by her

was given. Finally, when she expressed her willingness to die, she was thrown over to the sharks.'

Boteler (*c.* 1826) mentions that the Bonny bar 'was placated just before our arrival by the handsomest and finest lad procurable,' who was considered a sacred person and could claim anything he touched, being thrown over the bar.

Smith, in his 'Gulph of Guinea,' states: 'It has been customary at certain periods to sacrifice one or more human beings as an offering to the god of the bar of the River Bonny to prevent it filling up, as have several of the rivers of this coast. . . . On 19th of May 1840 the object of sacrifice was a little Eboe girl brought from the interior some months before for the purpose, who had been prepared for it at the house of juju. . . . The previous consecrations to this girl were two little boys. . . . When they arrived at the bar, the priest made a long palaver to the god, threw a quantity of cloth, rum, etc., into the water and then pitched in the offering, chair, decorations and all.'

Calman speaks of the 'superstitious ceremony performed at the Bonny River, about once in three years, which consists of offering the most beautiful virgin they can find as a sacrifice to their Jhu-Jhu, whereby they hope to propitiate the evil spirit and avert the dangers to which vessels are liable in crossing the bar.'

According to Sir Henry Huntly (1850), the girl was tied to a tray made of wickerwork—on her head a wreath of artificial flowers and ribbons. The tray was fastened to a raft at the bar of the river. 'If the child is soon torn off the tray, which it generally is immediately (for the incessant supply of food from the slave barracoons causes the sharks to congregate here), the country is in favour for the year, if on the contrary, it is an offending nation.'

One informant continued: 'Abazi [1] is a very powerful juju for our part. There is much strength in salt water. In olden days when a slave was bought in the interior and brought down, he was bathed in our salt water in order to

[1] This word is evidently the same as the Ibibio 'Abassi' and the Ekoi 'Obassi,' 'God.'

destroy any bad medicines which might have clung about him. No Kalabari can send out his soul into animal or serpent form, as other nations do, and when Ibo, who know this secret, come down to our country, after living there awhile, they can no longer go forth in animal shape. Should a man go on trying to do this, he will not succeed but must suffer or even die, slain by the power of Abazi.

'The places where the genii await their offerings are called Owu Pokku. Near every sacred pool two or three mangrove logs may be seen, driven into the ground. Sibbi is their name. The spirit of the water is drawn into these. It is always the same spirit who dwells therein, that of Sibbe-Ba,' *i.e.* 'water girl or daughter.'

FIG. 3.—Headdress only worn at the Conclusion of the Long Ceremony of Minji (water) Asaiya (the purifier), which lasts for Seven Years. Kalabari. (See pp. 62, 307.)

CHAPTER IV

Water Spirits (*continued*)

A little below Degama the opposite bank of the river is broken by a broad creek marked on the map Kala Irisira, but called by some Logo-Lobio. At the point where it flows into the Sombreiro, a bank of yellow sand known as Mimaw stretches out for some hundred yards, like a long, warning finger, barring intruders from the sacred water beyond. This sand-bank is the abode of Logo-Lobio himself, a very powerful spirit, who capsizes the canoes of those who have offended him, or against whom his aid has been invoked by beating of drum at Abonnema, Bakana or Buguma. He, too, usually appears in the form of a great serpent. Indeed, there is hardly a creek of any importance in these parts which is not the dwelling-place of some such Owu.

'When an Odumu grows very big and mighty, he comes down from the land where he had hitherto lived and sets out to seek a new creek beneath which to build his house. Should none prove vacant, a fresh water-way must be cut through the swamp. Often, when one looks up into the sky, a bright bow is seen shining across, one end near the water and the other reaching far into the bush. Then native people know this for a sign that a python is seeking a home. The rainbow cuts a path through the bush, water flows after it and, in this, the snake prepares his new dwelling. Sometimes the serpent himself is said to cut this passage. Up to that time he had been known as Odumu and had no special powers; but from building his home in the new creek, his name is changed to Adumu. Thereupon he becomes one of the Owu Amapu and shares in their powers.'

According to the belief of both Ibo and Kalabari, the

rainbow itself is the great ' snake of the heavens.' It is the sign of coming good fortune when a complete bow spans the sky, but it is regarded as an omen of danger to all who chance to see it when only a section is shown.

Among the Brass Ijaw, as with the Kalabari, Adumu is considered the head of all the water spirits and is often represented by a wooden figure, occasionally carved in the guise of a Portuguese of the sixteenth century as at Adum' Ama.

Only Odumu and Adumu have a shining stone in their heads. Odumu Nyingi is the native name for the horned Cerastes, and it is thought that if the horns touch your foot you die at once.

The following account was given by Chief Quaker Bob Manuel of Abonnema :

' The lower reaches of the Sombreiro River are called by natives Ololo Toro, from the big juju which is said to dwell therein. From Bile Creek right up to Agada the river is called Akuku Toro, after a man of Aloa. This is the reason for the name. The chief of all the water spirits throughout Abonnema part is called Osomboro. He is master of many lesser jujus whom he used to send trading to Aloa market. There they made friends with two merchants, a man named Akuku and his father. One day, when the son went into the river to bathe, the genii cast a magic over him and brought him down to the house of Osomboro. So pleased was Akuku with the wonders found beneath the water that he did not want to go back again to his own place, but stayed with his friends the Owu, and since then the river has been called by his name.

' There are plenty spirits in the water. People often see them as they pass through the swamps. There are different kinds, some like human beings but taller and fairer-skinned. Sometimes they have shining ornaments hung all over their bodies, but more often they wear no clothes at all. There are men, women and children among them, just as with us. Some are good, some bad. It is the bad ones who capsize canoes. We have heard of people drawn down by the Owu and mourned as dead, who have come back after two or

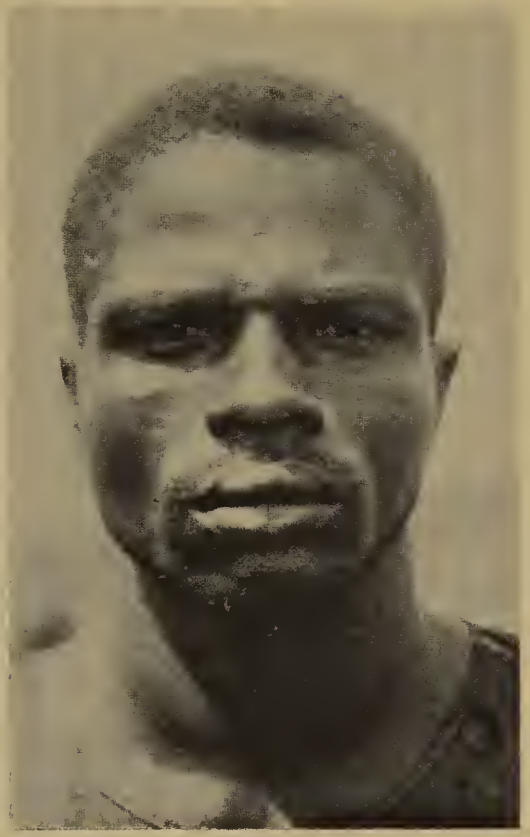
three days and told what they saw beneath the water. There are towns and houses like ours and the water spirits have a kind of chop which they sometimes give to human beings to eat. When a man has tasted such food, he is never hungry again.

'There is a race of Owu called Nondaw, which inhabits the swamps. These have been known to come into the towns and dwell there with men. In places like Brass and Warri descendants of these water folk are said to be alive to-day. Chief Ogbe of Warri is said to be descended from one of them. When Kalabari catch these Owu in fishing-nets, or while hunting, they first wash the water men with palm-oil, then break eggs over their bodies and give them purgatives to drink. Should the Nondaw seize a human being, they tear him to pieces with their claw-like hands, which have long and terrible nails. They are very bad indeed, and have such a powerful and dreadful scent that only strong people can bear to approach them. They look like mortals but walk differently. If they marry earth folk, their children are always prosperous. When women go out fishing with their piccans, the Nondaw often steal these, leaving some of their own in exchange. These changelings grow up looking like ordinary people, but their spirits are different and they are bolder and braver than common men.'

According to the Brass Ijaw, when they meet a small Nondaw, some two or three feet high, they take it to their houses and cut off the tail, and the spirit grows up like an ordinary man, from whom it cannot be distinguished.

Mr. M. M. C. Wari, a well-known Brass official, told us : 'The meaning of the word Nondaw is something wonderful, something rarely seen. These people have a language of their own, but Nondaws in the Nembe District all understand and speak Ijaw fluently. In this region they are often called the Owu Amanongu, or the people of Owu land. They are believed to have their houses in the deepest part of our rivers and creeks.

'Most of these dwelling-places on approach impress the intruders with the supernatural character of the place, one of the most impressive of these in the Brass District being the



A SOBO.

AN ORATTA IBO.

facing p. 50.

Ebi Erewo Tirigo, " the Good Maiden's Territory." This place is between Odiema and Brass. The place is not only impressive but wonderful as well, in that the mangrove growing in this cape-like piece of swamp differ in hue (pale) from the common specie, and they are by some mysterious force arranged in order of magnitude. The shortest trees, which are about two feet or a much lower height, grow nearest to the water's edge, and then come those next in height till an altitude of 200 or more feet is reached.

' This place I am inclined to believe took its name after a mode of hair-dressing, indulged in especially by New Calabar women, known as Ineburu among the Nembe, to accomplish which the hair nearest to the temple is clipped low and those next to them not so low till the crown is reached, at which point not a hair is clipped at all.

' It is held that on Kaka days, the Ibo Eke days, singings and drummings are heard in the middle of the swamp near the shrine where the cult objects of the Ebi Erewos are kept. Ebi Erewo had a pythoness at Nembe named Fuweinha. She died in 1917. She was a woman of great height and excellent physique. When inspired the Ebi Erewo designated themselves through Fuweinha as Purabo, meaning " Carry come," as it was said in the old days these reptiles showed favour to the children of men in need.

' Water spirits speak to men folk in the original Nembe language known as Tebu bibi.'

In the words of Obi Amara : ' Sometimes one sees a thing like a light which comes out of the water. Once, this year, a policeman was on guard by the water-side when he saw this come up. It is something like alligator, but different, with a long, sharp tail like a cutlass, with which it can strike off a man's head. In its mouth shines a light like a lamp. It caught the policeman and dragged him down to give to its piccans for chop.

' At Buguma there is a beast with a head like a frog, only many times bigger, which lives for water. When it wants to kill man, it opens its mouth wide and seizes him round the waist, or indeed anywhere. To catch this animal, Buguma people tie dog by long rope and put him for water. When

the beast comes up and swallows the dog, it cannot get away because of the rope. Therefore they get good chance to shoot him. One small girl, it cut her for leg last year, but she jumped, quick, quick, and so get away.'

Later we learned that this is the ordinary Kalabari method of catching sharks.

According to Mr. B. M. Pepple :

' Opu Adumu, the principal Bonny juju, lives in the water. The word Opu means " great," and is added to his name in order to magnify him ; Tololo, Oko Lobiebo, Adum-Ta and Ikpali are his wives. Oje Kurutu is his son. Biri-Kukuna, Ogboloyi-Dokku and Opu Pangaparafulosi are his daughters. Kondo, Ofombele and Owu-Awor are his servants. He has many servants in the water, for many of the water spirits serve him. Buru-Maba is Oje Kurutu's wife. The Ijaw juju Obubu is Opu Adumu's best friend. Adum visits Obubu in Akassa River. Owu Ekkpe is one of Adum's strong messengers. He lives in Bonny River and sometimes comes to the surface in the form of a ram.

' Ikuba and Nungbaw were strong Bonny jujus worshipped on land. They were thrown into the river when Christianity came to our country. It is said they are still living in Bonny River, but powerless. Kunbuyana-Arukara and Tolofari went and lived at Mba in Opobo River. These two jujus were wicked and capsized many Bonny canoes, going and coming from market, unless a small offering of palm-oil was thrown into the river. They so molested Bonny that my ancestor, King Dappa Pepple, went and cut off their heads, which he brought back to Bonny town. This happened long years ago.'

Besides those already mentioned, the following Owu are also worshipped among Kalabari :

Ekule Ekule Mgbe—a powerful spirit that lives in the Sombreiro River.

Ilu—an Owu said to inhabit the New Calabar River near Ewawfe. It is strenuously denied that human victims are ever offered up to the water sprites at the present day, but accident pointed to the probability of some such sacrifice having been made on one occasion. We chanced to pass

along the New Calabar River near Ewawfe when a crocodile was seen lying on the bank. A few moments later, to the delight of all concerned, the beast fell to my rifle. The reptile—over eleven feet from snout to tail tip—was cut up and divided among the crew.

We took the skin but naturally waived all claim to the 'beef' and returned to our interrupted work, thinking the little incident ended. Suddenly excited shouts arose and a man ran up to tell us that, while cutting up the stomach, two small Ibo bracelets, or anklets, of bronze, several tie-tie ropes, tightly knotted, and a quantity of human hair had been found. He, however, hastily added that this would not spoil the flesh : 'because it nebber be white man hair—only black man !'

Later a policeman brought in sixteen stones found in the same omnivorous receptacle. To Ibo ideas this proved that the beast had swallowed that number of victims. Ibibio, on the contrary, say that the number of stones found in a crocodile denotes his age, of which he thus keeps tally !

The bronze bracelets were pitifully small, while the tie-tie was knotted in loops which could hold none but the slenderest of wrists or ankles. It seems probable, therefore, that some child victim had been bound to tree or stake, amid the mangrove swamps, and there left to be devoured by the crocodiles or as an offering to some river juju to induce the granting of plentiful catches of fish.

Sua-Kong ('sticks driven in')—fish traps. This, as its name denotes, is the juju of the fish traps, both of those built far out into the water and the smaller ones set near the shore.

Mgbe Gbolo Owu—an Owu in the Sombreiro River near Bakana, which makes the water rough when the canoes of men, against whom it has been invoked, pass by.

Ekku—the spirit of the juju rocks near Tombia (Young Town). This used to smash up any canoe that ran thereon without first making sacrifice to the juju. In reality, the so-called rock is nothing more than a pebbly sand-bank ; but it forms a distinct menace to waterfarers. Once the Government launch *Thistle* was almost capsized there.

Obia and Ala-Kikia ('salt water stop')—Own in the

Upper New Calabar River. These two jujus forbade Kalabari women to pass in canoes along this part of the river. The effect of such a prohibition was to cut them off from Isoba and Isokpo markets, save by undertaking a long land march. Because of this tabu, women traders had to land at Okpaw beach, walk to Isoba and there re-enter the canoes which, meanwhile, had been brought through the forbidden stretch of water by their men friends. The tradition ran that, should any woman pass through, the genii guarding this particular piece of water would make the river so salt as to render it unfit for drinking.

Isemsuru—an Owu in the river near Bakana. It is said always to upset the canoes of those against whom it has been invoked.

Oloma Ina Ogilolo—the spirit of dysentery and diarrhœa. It is classed among the Owu, because these diseases so often come from drinking impure water.

Aro ('canoe'), represented by a large carved figure, bearded and moustachioed, placed in a shrine which is painted in many colours at Okrika. Its festival is celebrated at the time of the new yams, when two gaily decorated canoes parade the river, one full of drummers.

Kabo-Jibe (Jibe of the Kabo or Patani Ijaw) is the principal cult of those of this clan settled to the south of Abaw. Cassava is tabu to all who worship this juju, and whenever a Patani man returns to his country after a journey he must give two bottles of gin and a piece of white cloth as a thank-offering. Kabo-Jibe is a feminine spirit inhabiting this part of the Niger, and is especially powerful at time of flood,when the inundations form vast swamps, from which great catches of fish are obtained. Before beginning to cut new farms, when the water is low, the women, wearing their finest cloths and ornaments, bear offerings of yams to the shrine.

The spirit is said to be very strong to protect her worshippers, and the reason that none of the many Ijaw of this region, from which most of the crews of Government launches are recruited, was killed in the Cameroons campaign of 1914–15, was ascribed to the fact that the mothers prayed

Kabo-Jibe to protect their absent sons and promised that, should these return safely, an offering of gin and white cloth would be brought in thanksgiving.

Odoni, one of the neighbouring Ijaw towns, is the home of the juju Benni-Kuru-Kuru. This is apparently a male water spirit, and it is said that, when this juju ' enters into a woman '—*i.e.* calls her to his special service—she may not be taken in marriage by any but one of her own townsmen. Should a stranger disregard this law and marry her, one of the offending pair would die.

In the Warri region the two most important Owu seem to be Amasi Mokuma and Ainyanka, the latter of which is ' played ' when the river Niger begins to fall about December, and also at the death of a chief.

As is natural from their geographical situation, Ibo are far less given to the worship of water spirits than their coastal neighbours. Of river jujus, held in honour by this people in Owerri and Degama Divisions, the spirit of the Otaminni holds chief place.

The Etche priest of the sacred water—also named Otaminni in honour of the juju which he served—died only a few months ago at Opioro, where the principal shrine of this region, an elaborate Mbari house, has been erected. He told us that the spirit was a male one, who demanded sacrifice of eggs and fowls and granted long life and many piccans to his worshippers. The chief ceremonies are performed for him at the time of new yams. When the juju wishes to kill a man, he does this by sending him pains in the head. These are so terrible that no one can bear them for long and all die in the end.

As one follows the main stream, the uncanny impression grows stronger. Between walls of dense bush, thick and dark as yew hedges in old-world gardens at home, the current swirls and eddies—oft over depths varying from twenty to fifty feet, scooped out in the narrow, ravine-like bed.

Except in the lower reaches, no canoe ventures out on these dangerous waters throughout the whole rainy season, not only from dread of the juju but also on account of the many whirlpools at its sudden bends. In places, where the

banks are broken by creeks, the mouths of which lie opposite one another, travellers are taken over on long, narrow rafts, propelled by some half-dozen polers and capable of bearing as many passengers. These get up a speed of four to seven miles before nearing the sacred water, over which they shoot.

According to Amuneke of Owerri : ' Otaminni is a very strong juju. If any man has lied upon his name, that man will die in the space of one month. Also, Otaminni is swift to kill everyone against whom his name is invoked. In olden days, if a fisherman threw net for this water, the spirit drew him down and killed him one time.'

Why this river, together with its main tributary the Ogochi, has become juju, is easy to see when one follows its serpentine bends or stands in the middle of the native bridge near Nihi, looking down through the water, here some twenty feet deep and of almost as intense an azure as that of the famous Blue Grotto of Capri. From beneath shimmers the white sand of its bed, across which dart fishes of strange shapes and colouring and an occasional water snake. There is no denying the spell of the spot, the glamour of which makes itself felt by all. It is natural, therefore, that, to the native mind, ever open to impressions of awe and wonder, this water, so different to any other in the district and strongly recalling the still more beautiful juju water of Eket, should be looked upon as the dwelling-place of mysterious powers. Here and there, fixed on a sharply-pointed stick, an egg may be seen, offered in prayer for help or thanksgiving for favours already granted.

The chief play in honour of this juju is called Mbobo Osaw, and is given on the upper reaches of the river three weeks after all yams have been planted. According to the account given by Amuneke of Owerri : During the interval the oldest men and women from each compound fortify themselves by magic medicines in preparation for the ceremony. On the day chosen they gather together before the priest's house at about four in the afternoon and two hours later set out for the sacred bush. No matchet, knife or any metal may be taken, and no branch or other obstacle

cleared from the road unless pushed aside by the feet. In one hand each carries a piece of chalk, with which to mark every tree by the wayside, and in the other a little pot called Udu Otaminni. They may not stop singing all the way.

At length they come to a stretch of black water, before which all sit down and listen to the priest, who explains the law of the juju to them till a late hour. At midnight it is said that Otaminni sometimes comes forth and shows himself to the watchers. Afterwards each goes, one by one, to the edge of the water and fills his pitcher. With them also go barren women, who have joined the party in the hope that their curse may be removed by the power of the juju.

On the way home they walk very quickly, singing and shouting when nearing the town. So soon as their coming is heard, all the townspeople must keep silence; no man may speak at all for a time, after which it is permitted to whisper.

Next morning, everyone is given some of the water from Udu Otaminni. It is said that, if this ceremony were not carried out, many deaths would follow the eating of new yams.

'When people crossed the Otaminni on their way to the long juju, they had to pour out libations of gin and sacrifice food. They then went to the house of the priest, who took them before the juju and told him: "These men have made offerings to you and wish you to look after them till they return." When they left the juju and went to the next town, the head-men came out and asked them for drink, etc., before they passed through, and so on till they came to Aro Chuku.'

The following story of the terrible water-wife Wainya Wala-Dala was given by Obi Amara:

'This spirit does not live in all streams and creeks, but only in Esu water at Awka part. She is a water woman with long, long breasts, which are not soft like those of women but hard and sharp, so that she can lift them up and strike with them like a sword. Should she hit a man with her breast, he must die.'

At Okuma, in Ahoada District, lies a juju pool, inhabited

by a spirit which can read the secret thoughts of men. Case No. 66/14 concerning this juju was heard in Okwuzi Court. In the course of his evidence the plaintiff Uturu stated on oath :

'About twelve days ago myself and accused went to Okuma for fishing. . . . This pool . . . is a great juju for our native people. Accused mentioned my name to the juju [begging] that it would kill me and my mother, because [he said] I used to take his people's wives from them. . . .'

The accused Aliba stated on oath :

'The said Okuma is a great juju. Whenever people go there, they need not say a word, owing to the power of the juju' (which knows their thoughts).

Among Ndonni there is a fishing water, called Iyo Ikoro Abara, where no woman may go at certain times. This is mentioned in Case No. 109/12, brought by Amele of Ndonni against Chief Wachuku.

Plaintiff stated :

'Defendant brought his people and broke down my house, pulling off the roof, because I found a woman washing in a certain forbidden water, naked. I reproved her, saying that an alligator would catch her.'

Defendant : 'Amele caused trouble in the compound, interfering with our women who were performing their juju. . . .'

Near Ogada, in Ahoada District, lies a sacred water called Minni Odule, which was discovered early in 1916 by Dr. Beale Browne and the then Assistant District Officer, Mr. Dundas. On our return from England, a few months later, we visited the place and found that Odule is a woman spirit who lives in its depths and grants 'plenty piccans' to her worshippers. Down to the shore come barren women, unrobed save for a length of white baft tied round the waist and bearing offerings of yams and plantains. On their behalf the priest of the juju sacrifices a cow and sprinkles its blood upon the shore.

The sacred water is about a mile and a half in length and bears the aspect of an old river-bed, though without visible outlet or inlet. Beside its tutelary spirit, it is haunted by the

ghosts of dead and gone men of Ogada, who here await reincarnation in crocodile form.

Every fourth day, called Nkwaw, is sacred, and should man or woman chance to fall into the water they would be unharmed by the beasts, who are said to remain in hiding between dawn and sunset at such a time. Fishing is forbidden save on one day in the year, which falls in late May, just before the beginning of the rains. Ogada people themselves never join in this, lest, by so doing, they might disturb the spirits of their forbears.

It is forbidden for any dog to be taken across the lake, and, should this rule be transgressed, it is said that a crocodile will lift itself out of the water and, holding the rim of the boat, seize the unwitting trespasser.

Our visit did not fall on Nkwaw day and, in consequence, many an overhanging branch or fallen trunk was passed whereon, in the warm sunshine, ' the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.' It is said that the lake never dries up and that once in every seven years floods from the Orashi reach its shores. At such times hippopotami come down, and on the track of these intruders follow hunters, so the peace of the waiting ghosts is broken by the flash and crash of cap- or flint-lock guns.

Beneath the waters of the beautiful Oguta Lake, in Owerri District, dwells a feminine water sprite, who occasionally comes ashore to ask for gifts. The following account was kindly supplied by Mr. Hobson, of Oguta. To the courtesy shown us on our visit to the lake he added the extraordinary kindness of gleaning and writing down this information when only just recovering from a three-weeks' illness. The story was told him by his clerk, Mr. Z. Macaulay, who claims to have seen the spirit on several occasions. Mr. Hobson writes :

' My old clerk, Z. Macaulay of Sierra Leone, has been here so long that he believes in most of the Oguta jujus. It is he who tells the tale. It appears that when he first came, in 1886, he stayed in the same house as a clerk named Williams. One day a very short, very stout, light-skinned woman, with a huge calabash (contents not known !) on her

head, came to the house and asked for Mr. Williams. On the appearance of the latter, she said she had come for a dash (so far as I can gather, Williams had seen her before). She sat down on the verandah upon a small stool she had brought with her, until some presents had been given her. (Time about 6 P.M.) She then got up to go, and Macaulay tells me—and, what is more, firmly believes it—that she had not gone more than three yards or so from them when she vanished completely. He made enquiries next day from an Oguta chief and was told that the visitor was the spirit of the lake, who occasionally came ashore for small presents. Whether she is good or bad, or anything further about her, I could not find out. You know how difficult it is to make natives talk.

'Macaulay also tells me that years ago there used to be a woman here who had the habit of sitting on the shore all night, talking to the water spirit. Farther up the Oguta River there is some very deep, clear water full of fish—all sacred ; but Macaulay can tell no more about any of these.'

The Orashi River, into which flow the waters of Oguta Lake, is also inhabited by a water spirit, the priest of which dwells at Okiia.

In the bush, on the other side of the Orashi, lives yet another water spirit, Itu Ogbaii by name, to whom sacrifices are made for ensuring plentiful catches of fish. She also protects owners of fishing grounds from loss by theft, and slays any man who should trespass in waters placed beneath her protection. The Oriokpa River, a little to the east, is also worshipped by Obokoffia people, though Udu-Obba is said to be the principal juju of this town.

The word used throughout this part of the Division for water spirit—corresponding to the Kalabari Owu—is 'Okoroshi,' though this refers more accurately to a grade of the local Obukele Society. One of the principal chiefs of Ale Nsaw gave us the following information :

'Among our people, when a play is given in honour of the Okoroshi, women are forbidden to see the men, who are covered up with cloth, because these represent the spirits which come up out of the water.'

THE POOL OF MIRI OMMU.

facing p. 60.

We were afterwards informed that for a woman to gaze on such a sight would have a bad effect either upon her own fertility or that of the tribe.

A case illustrating this custom came before the Native Court of Okwuzi. In this, the accused Amade stated :

'On the 13th inst. prosecutor was covered with cloth according to native law and customs. Then my father was leading a woman through the place where the accused was, so he came out and flogged the woman. Owing to that I was annoyed and also caned him. It is our country custom that whenever such plays take place no woman should see it, neither may a woman walk in the street at such a time without being led by a member of the club.'

Another Ibo water spirit, Miri-Ommu ('water the birth-giver') by name, dwells with his wife, Enwenni Miri, in a sacred pool near Nkarahia. This juju, whose shrine we were the first Europeans to be permitted to visit, is renowned throughout the region as very powerful to avenge the breaking of oaths sworn upon his name. He is said to be the dominant juju of the whole neighbourhood.

After following a bush-path, which branches off from the main road near the rest-house, for over a mile, we came to a small tree round which hung several fathoms of white cloth. This was the home of the water-wife. A little to the left lay the place of sacrifice—a heap of charred logs, half surrounded by a rough semicircle of feathers plucked from recent offerings. Behind these lay new-cut palm spathes and some young palm leaves, only half unfolded, like those borne in procession in church at Easter time.

A few yards farther on the path crossed a shallow water which rose from a small pool to the right, the farther shore of which was festooned by white baft hanging from the branches and draped round and round a slender tree trunk.

In this spot dwelt Miri-Ommu himself. Earthen bowls were placed around, alternating with heaps of hens' feathers, some of which were stuck upon the branches overhead and upon poles ; while everywhere in the bush lay empty gin bottles, the contents of which had been poured out in libations.

Why the pool should have been thought of special sanctity, it was impossible to guess. Unlike most sacred spots hitherto visited, there was nothing impressive about it ; while of the spirit, which is said to be so powerful as to strike with death or blindness any who have taken his name in vain, we could only learn :

' Our fathers told us they had heard from their forefathers that strange power dwells in this place and that Miri-Ommu kills all who dare to speak falsely after his name has been invoked.'

The shrine of another water spirit, Minji Asaiya, whose personal name was said to be Onuran, is to be found at the Mbolli town of Alessa, not far from the sacred crocodile swamp. On the wall of the shrine hung the big looking-glass shown below. Here a priestess is depicted in the attitude of pouring a libation to the water spirits. Possibly this represents one of those to whom he is supposed to be linked in mystic spousals.

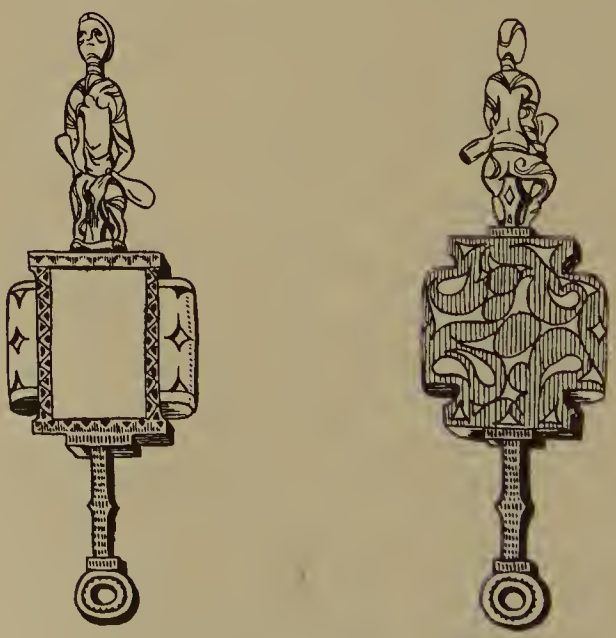


Fig. 4.—The Mirror of Minji Asaiya.

CHAPTER V

Land Spirits

The land jujus are called ' Oru ' by Kalabari to distinguish them from the ' Owu,' or water spirits, dealt with in the last chapter. The local Ibo word for these nature forces is ' Abara.' According to most Ijaw, the land jujus originally came out of the water and are still inferior in power to the water spirits. The story of their coming was told by Mrs. A. K. B. Manuel, wife of the Native Court clerk at Degama : ' At the beginning of things there were no jujus ; only the goddess Tamuno, who is called Chi by Ibo people. In olden days she was represented by a small thing like a ball [1] dented in the centre and made of a special kind of clay, which is dug from Ilellima and Abonnema bush. Every man or woman set one of these in a good place in their houses and worshipped it as their personal god, because Chi dwelt therein. When a woman knew that she was going to bear a piccan in four moons, she had to buy one of these for three heads of plantains. Afterwards she cooked chop and set before it—always making offerings. Should she fall sick, people said : " Look ! your god vex with you." Then she had to go out and buy fish and plenty other things, good too much ! and set these before that clay ball, which was, in shape, just like those which young girls offer to their Eku in Ibo country.[1]

' Now one time, at the beginning of the world, Tamuno called Tortoise and several other people to make farm for her. Also she told Tortoise to send a he-goat to look after the vegetables already planted—bidding him choose a goat which would be quick and bear plenty of kids for her.

' Tortoise said : " All right ; but, if you ask such a thing

[1] See *Some Nigerian Fertility Cults*, p. 56.

of me, first take earth from the ground, mould it and make therefrom a carrier's pad (called by us Ezikila and by Ibo Azu); put this upon my head and lift the he-goat on top."

'Tamuno answered: "How can I make such a thing out of earth? It would fall apart!" To this Tortoise replied: "How can I look after a he-goat and make it bear piccans for you?" Then the goddess was annoyed and thought how to punish Tortoise for his impertinence. After a while she called the people together, saying: "To-morrow you must all come to farm work." So next morning they came.

'When the work was done, Tamuno gave chop to all except Tortoise. To him she gave nothing, because she was still angry. At six o'clock time they went home and Tortoise determined not to come back again. Now the goddess had created a medicine and fixed it in the mind of Tortoise; so, when he said to himself: "I will come no more," the medicine spoke to him, saying: "You will come back!" He looked round but could see no one.

'Early next morning he found himself forced to get up and call the others to work. Again that day the same thing happened. All other men were given food, but to him none was given. Again he went away determined not to return, but again he heard the same thing in his head.

'Now Tortoise was very angry with the goddess, so he went to his house, took matchet and axe and set out for bush to cut sticks—fancy sticks, carved all over. When these were finished, he cleared a space and planted them therein. After this he gave each stick a name. One he called Okpolodo Amine Oru [the meaning of this it has, unfortunately, been impossible to find out]. Another was named Si Miene Koroa Okpolodo Ame Oru [*i.e.* "not hard to do bad"]. A third was Ibi Miene Pekele Pakaa Oru ["very hard to do good"]. Also he named many others. When all was finished, he took a seat and sat down to watch over the jujus and prevent anyone from passing by.

'All unknowing, there came a woman sent by the goddess. At once Tortoise cried: "You have done the forbidden thing! No woman may pass by these jujus!" (Even to-day it is forbidden for us women to pass by, when men

play the Oru play in the streets ; but Abonnema women may join in the Owu play, dancing up and down as if mad.)

'When the messenger heard that word, she was frightened and said : "What must I do ?" On this, Tortoise told her to bring such and such things and offer them in sacrifice for purification.

'Then the girl ran to Tamuno and told what had happened ; but even the goddess could not stop juju, now it had come. So they took yams and fish and gave to Tortoise, who cooked these and set them out before the carved sticks, saying he was now making good the wrong done by the woman.

'That is how jujus first came to earth—because Tortoise was angry with Tamuno and wished to set up another power beside hers.' [1]

On the hypothesis—as stated by more than one responsible informant—that Tortoise is the feminine, as the phallic serpent is the male, symbol, it is not without significance (*a*) that the original quarrel with the virgin creatrix is supposed to have arisen, to a certain extent at least, over a question touching the subject of sex—in that she exacted the birth of kids from a he-goat ; while (*b*) the origin of all jujus is ascribed to Tortoise. This is the more significant when one bears in mind that the chief function of protective jujus, called by Ibo Ibudu, is the increase of fertility.

Among the semi-Bantu Ekoi the reasons given for the impaling of Tortoise before all those jujus connected with fecundity—a custom which also prevails among Ibo and Ibibio and is here said to be intended as a representation of the 'geschlecht's act,' like the joining of haft to head in the old Minoan double-headed axe cult—was that it was inflicted in punishment for having passed off his two sons as virgin brides to the Sky God, Obassi Osaw. The story of how the two boys deluded their heavenly spouse by stealing from Lizard the organs necessary for this deception has been given in another place.[2]

[1] *Cf.* this story with the Ekoi version. The Ibibio account is practically identical.

[2] *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 378.

No satisfactory explanation has, however, yet been found as to why Tortoise figures as masculine throughout all such stories.

Of jujus for obtaining prosperity and fertility, those erected in honour of Ale, the Earth Goddess, and the phallic pillars called by Ibo Ibudu, raised with the avowed object of bringing protection to the family and fruitfulness to farm, byre, and marriage bed, are easily the chief. No clear line appears to be drawn between the two cults, and their functions seem, in many cases, to overlap. So complicated is the subject and so closely connected with the rites of other divinities, such as the Thunder God Amade Onhia on the one hand, and the ancestor worship on the other, that it has been found more convenient to treat of these in a separate monograph (' Some Nigerian Fertility Cults ').

The way of any administrator, however able and conscientious, must ever be beset with pitfalls, due to lack of knowledge of native custom and belief, which alone can secure justice to people such as these. This applies not only to white officials, but, almost in an equal degree, to black ones brought from another tribe. For instance : when an urgent appeal reached me from a native clerk that a certain Ibo juju was endangering the maintenance of law and order, it seemed from his account that the priest in question had deliberately defied Government, since he had forbidden all in his town to apply for a court summons against man or woman guilty of wrong-doing.

So serious was the affair represented to be, that it was necessary to set out at once to the insubordinate town—a place named Omo Dioga, to the north of Elele. Investigation appeared to deepen the gravity of the offence. The juju house consisted of one small, dark room, containing cult objects of considerable interest, including three sacred drums and some finely carved blocks made in honour of the ancestral ghosts. All were carried off, pending judicial inquiries, and placed for safe keeping in the central room of the rest-house where we were staying, in which a light was kept burning all night to deter attempts at recapture.

Early next morning it was imperative to visit another

town where the presence of the white man was urgently needed ; so the cult objects were left in charge of a corporal and the only three other police available. Everything seemed peaceful ; but no sooner had I disappeared from the scene than a horde of Omo Diogoans burst in from the rear of the building, rescued every one of the cult objects and restored them to the juju house.

It is but one of many tributes deserved by loyal members of the Nigerian Police Force to add that the corporal, with his three men, bloodlessly recaptured everything and conducted all the juju objects according to orders to Elele, to be produced before court in the course of the pending trial. The priest and twenty-one of his principal followers were also sent to the same place to be tried by the Native Court. During the course of the trial, Chief Orusa Bawan—the man who had first given information on the matter—stated on oath :

' I am the chief of Omo Dioga. Orusa Boji Ala is the priest of the juju Okku Nhie Ajokko [" bowl of the things of Ajokko, the yam spirit "]. One day, on my return to the town, I was informed that all the accused had sworn this juju so that no one at Omo Dioga might go to court.'

Orusa Woji Ala stated :

' I am the priest of this juju and have invoked it. It is a juju connected with our festival Nhie Ajokko. It is our custom to hold this feast at every new yam time. We buy fish and put water in the juju pot. [This was an earthen bowl, a foot and a half across, containing two small pots so tightly bound together as to form a single object, roughly oval in shape.] All the townsfolk come together and we announce that we are going to hold our play. No one may quarrel with one another at such a time. No man may beat, or quarrel with, his wife. No one should act violently. We fix a day for the ceremony to begin and the sacred time lasts from then for the space of twenty-four days. Every man who can afford to buy fowl or goat for sacrifice does so, and it is slain on the last day of the festival on behalf of the children of each compound.'

Didia Ollo stated on oath :

' I was present at the ceremony of the giving out of fish,

but not when the water was thrown and the juju invoked. [Here the priest rose to make objection to his statement and, in answer, the witness continued :]

'Yes. I was present, but the words of invocation were : "That coco-yams in the farms should grow up proper ; that other kind of yams, and everything we planted in the farm, should grow up proper." Also "Nobody is to fight. Nobody is to assault or quarrel with his wife. No one may cut another man with his knife. No one may fire gun." We never mentioned the name of court.'

J. Maddy stated on oath :

'I am the clerk of Elele Court and produce the cause books. Since the 5th July the only criminal or civil summons issued to an Omo Diogoan is that of Onyekwe. Usually a large number of summones are taken—more cases from Omo Dioga than any other town under this court.'

Otu (accused No. 3) stated :

'The whole of Omo Dioga people were present at the ceremony. The reason for performing it is to stop people from having quarrel. We said : "Let the earth prosper for us, that our yams and other crops may grow up proper !" Then we threw the water and all left the place. The words we said are those used in the past. Our fathers taught us that it is bad to quarrel at such a time, because Ale would be displeased and, in consequence, not let the crops grow well.'

Orusa Woji Ala stated :

'Yes. Such is the law of our ancestors. They have said that, if at this time of year we fought or quarrelled in the town, the earth would not be pleased and therefore not let our crops grow up properly.'

Now it was known, from the statements of Eleche, priest of the yam juju Aya-Eke, and Wa-Oyike, priest of the new corn juju, both of Elele, that a similar rule obtained with regard to their cults. The balance of probability, therefore, inclined towards the assertion of the chiefs that they had not acted in opposition to Government, but only invoked the juju, according to ancient custom, to prevent strife during the sacred month of Ale. Since litigation can hardly be carried on in the friendly spirit, which alone draws down the

KWALE IBO STILT-DANCERS.

ENTRANCE TO THE ENCLOSURE OF THE CULT OF OKPARABO, AT OMOSIGIU, KWALE IBO.

facing p. 68.

blessing of the Earth Mother, that also was stopped—not by direct order of the priest, but by a quite logical conclusion on the part of the people.

The cult objects, which had been seized pending trial and, as already related, rescued and again captured, were therefore restored to their worshippers. Great was the consequent rejoicing, and Chief Wa-Oyike—priest of the new corn juju—rose to say that the people of the region were grateful to be ruled by officials who were willing to study their customs and not condemn native rites unless these were contrary to Government orders. He expressed again and again, in terms which at the time (1915) sounded strangely ironical, how important it is to native ideas that men should practise peace and good-will during the sacred month of Ale. Should the peace of the Earth Mother be broken, she would permit the ground to bring forth but scanty harvest; whereas, did but universal goodwill reign at such a time, crops would spring forth with luxuriance, flocks yield great increase and a multitude of strong and healthy babes be sent to gladden happy hearths.

Surely here, in the sacred month of Ale, we have a faint echo of that other halcyon time when :

> 'No war or battle sound
> Was heard the World around,
> The idle spear and shield were high uphung.'

This 'peace of the Earth Goddess' and the Ekoi rule, related in 'In the Shadow of the Bush,' p. 120, that neither quarrelling nor harsh voices may be permitted in any house where little children dwell, seem among the most charming of native beliefs. In both, maybe, lies a germ of truth on which, for all our vaunted civilisation, we might do well to ponder. It is indicative of the strength of their hold that, amid the general cataclysm, the last-mentioned cults remain as yet unshaken.

For most of us the very term 'juju' has grown to be almost synonymous with dark and dreadful crimes, hideous rites and the long-drawn-out agony of victims. Of the other side of the picture—of juju as a sanctuary for the oppressed, the forbidder of bloodshed, avenger of crime, no

matter how craftily hidden, and the preacher of peace and good-will—too little is known. Yet there is such a side. As Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow expressed the matter :

' When a dreamer is assailed by bad ghosts, he always calls upon the name of his father and mother, whether alive or dead, and upon jujus. Both among Kalabari and Ibo nearly all jujus are friendly to human beings except when offended. Sacrifices, except when offered in expiation, are given in pure thankfulness and gratitude. Whenever a man is saved from trouble, he offers up a sacrifice in thanksgiving to his juju.'

Throughout Degama Division the cult, which perhaps best typifies this gentler aspect, is the dominant Kalabari juju Awome-Kala-So (' children small luck '), generally contracted into Awome-Ka-So. She is said to have been the seventh and youngest and the most powerful of her family, and the Kalabari considered themselves very fortunate that she should have come to them as their tutelary juju, since they were ' small children ' compared with some of the neighbouring tribes. Very human are these strange demi-gods. For instance, the one above mentioned ' came to this region,' in the words of Chief Obenibo, ' in the time of King Owerri Daba, floating here, by her own power, out of the sea. She was like a beautiful woman, very pale of skin, robed nicely and with her head tied up in a fine cloth. Our people found her sitting alone in a small canoe.

' When she came to the Kalabari they had plenty other jujus too much ; but she overcame these and became chief juju for all that country. She said that she was ill-treated and not honoured enough at Old Calabar, where the people refused to obey her. She put law against the killing of men, especially one's own countrymen. Except in war, no one might be killed. Also she forbade men to abuse women. Should a man persuade a woman to grant him favours he was forbidden to tell it out. Men were also forbidden to see women bathing or relieving nature. Should any man disobey any of the three last rules, the punishment ordained was for the women to strip him naked in the street and tie him up. They sang abusive songs against him and would

not set him free till after payment of a heavy amount. Unless he confessed and paid the fine, he would be seized with sickness of the membrum virile, which, in the end, would rot off.

'Awome-Ka-So used to speak to the people in the form of a beautiful woman. I do not know if she was a white woman.[1] It was before white people were known in our part; but we think she may have been a white woman because there is a law that the priest chosen to make sacrifice for her must always be pale of skin. Also he might only be rowed in a European boat. The wife of this priest was the only woman among all the people permitted to cover her head with a cloth or hat or hold up an unbrella.'

Even now, lawfully married wives, who still keep the rules of the juju, are not allowed to wear any head covering of cloth or silk, though straw hats of European make are no longer forbidden. Till a few years ago no woman might use an umbrella. This prohibition is said to have been enforced because members of the Sakapu club dance with covered heads and it was thought that, were women permitted to copy them in the matter, those of ambitious mind might be tempted further to imitate the dress of this powerful society. In the oldest Kalabari towns, such as Kula and Aiya Abissa, the rule was, however, never in force. There women were allowed even to become members of the club and to hold a feast of their own when Owu plays were given. Among other Kalabari towns, only the wife of Awome-Ka-So's priest might enter the house where the Owu ceremonies are performed. This privilege is said to be accorded her because her position is of such dignity and importance as to cause her to be regarded as a man!

To continue the account given by Chief Obenibo:

'At first, when Awome-Ka-So wished to speak to people, she came out herself; but after a time she vanished away and only spoke through the mouth of her priestess. When the priest poured out rum or made sacrifice to her, drums were beaten and bells rung. King Owerri Daba used also

[1] The two carved representations of her, saved when all others were destroyed, both show a chin longer and more pointed than is usual hereabouts.

to do this last, but the new juju told him to stop. He never agreed to obey and so was struck dead.

'Awome-Ka-So and her brothers and sisters are one family of juju. Akea of Aiya Abissa is the elder brother. He was the first to come to this region. Aiya-Aba of Kara-Karama is the elder sister. Amanin-Giu of Ifawkaw is also a brother. These three are older than the rest of the family. One other sister is Awu-Oba of Bile. This last is full sister to Awome-Ka-So ; same father, same mother. I cannot tell which of these was the first to come to our country. Perhaps Awome-Ka-So established herself at Calabar, thinking to stay there ; then, not being worshipped properly and hearing that her new relatives were doing well in Degama part, came over to join them. Our fathers told us that all arrived looking at first like human beings and afterwards vanished.

'All our people worship Awome-Ka-So, and for her ceremonies the chief women of the town, who form a kind of priestesses' club, come out, their skins painted over with cam-wood and black patterns. The cloth worn for her ceremonies must be " real India " rubbed over with red dye.

'In war time Awome-Ka-So gives help to warriors, and advises the chiefs how to bring wars to an end by making sacrifice. She also draws plenty trade to her worshippers and brings them wealth in many other ways.

'Every eighth day small offerings of rum and food sacrifices are made in her honour. Sometimes when a chief goes to her for help in time of trouble and is saved by her, he holds a great festival. At one of the big plays given for her, no man may set foot to ground but must walk on stilts one and a half feet high. My father used to use stilts high above all others on such occasions. This may only be done by one man who acts as judge, settling palavers, and is always called Amasu.

'Awome-Ka-So did not want the Kalabari to fight with Bile, because of her sister, who had settled there ; so, when her people wished to make war on this town, she went first and gave warning. That is why we never brought these men under us.'

It is worthy of remark that the three women spirits mentioned above (in contradiction to their male relatives, together with the great Ikuba juju at Bonny, stated by another witness to be the head of this queer spirit family and to be seen only by his priests, and his second in command, the Okrikan juju Fene-Be-So) refuse offerings of human flesh which are eagerly demanded by their cannibalistic kinsmen. The juju Ogboloma, whose chief shrine is at Tema on a little creek near Degama, is said to be the daughter of Awome-Ka-So and to share her mother's disinclination for human offerings. So strict was the rule against the shedding of blood laid down by Awome-Ka-So that even prisoners of war were safe, could they succeed in reaching her territory. Captives, destined by Kalabari to be offered up at Peri ceremonies, for instance, had to be slain before crossing her boundary, so that at least the letter of this rule might not be broken.

A second account of the coming of Awome-Ka-So was given by Samuel Bob Manuel and is as follows :

'Oloma, an Abo woman, is the grandmother of Awome-Ka-So. She was married to an Iselema chief (probably Iselema man is a Benin man). They begat a daughter Awo by name. She was kept from public views (as children of chiefs were usually done then).

'A certain fisherman Ombolo or Akwaowi, as he is called, one day brought to the house of Oloma and her husband a quantity of fishes. This fisherman managed and saw their daughter Awo. He stealthily went into her apartment and had sexual connection with her. Awo reported the occurrence to her parents, but when Ombolo was looked for he could not be seen. The sexual connection ended in the conception of this maiden. The usual time of childbirth came but she did not bear until the twelfth month. Just then the fisherman Ombolo arrived again with a quantity of fishes. He foresaw the struggling of childbirth and came to meet Awo. He went to the house and saw Awo in the state he foresaw her. He returned to his canoe and brought a drum, ikiriko as it is called, to the compound. With this he played and called the child to come out of the mother's

womb ("Ayaba Pakabo" being "Ayaba come out," was all he played). The first then came out. He then played for the second to come out, and this came out—Awoba by name. He played for third—Akiya by name; for the fourth—Temina-aro by name; for the fifth—Amanigio by name; for the sixth—Ibanigidi by name; for the seventh—Egbeba by name; for the eighth—Samina Awoba by name; for the ninth—Bakana Ziba by name; for the tenth—Dekemina by name; for the eleventh—Obonoma Ziba by name; for the twelfth—Isomina Awoba by name; for the thirteenth—Bukumina Ziba; for the fourteenth—Komoba Awoba by name; and then for the fifteenth—Awome-Ka-So by name. Before the mother was able to bring forth Awome-Ka-So it took a long time. The child would not come out at the beating of the drum. The child asked for a kind of cloth which her grandmother Oloma had. It was when this cloth was brought that the mother was able to bring forth the child. The name of the cloth is okpokpointa (or juju cloth as foreigners call it). When these fifteen children were brought forth, one after the other on the same day, the father from the fishes he brought gave to each a kind of fish and commanded them to use that kind only. The father left them after this.

'When the children had all grown to a certain age the father returned. At this time the children troubled their parents to give them leave to go to foreign lands. The father consented to their request. He gave to each of them a different kind of animal and commanded that that should be used wherever they went. The parents as a send-off made a feast in which the different animals and fishes were used.

'When the cooking was ended, the grandmother, Oloma, brought a piece of "written paper" and promised to give to any of them who would be able to put down the pot from the fire. All but Awome-Ka-So were unable to do this. She (Awome-Ka-So) put her hand into the pot and took the bundle of the fishes from the pot as payment for her work. This was taken from her and the piece of the written paper was given to her in exchange. After the send-off they all

went down to a big canoe, when here Ibanigidi, who envied Awome-Ka-So because of the prize, seized the " written paper " from her which she kept under her throne, the reason being that the grandmother (Oloma) said that anybody who possessed it, Europeans would come to that one and trade and make that one's town fine. Ibanigidi took a greater half of the paper, which got torn during the contest.

' The canoe set out and every one of them went to where befitted his, or her, residence. Awome-Ka-So went to Old Calabar. She robed the okpokpointa (the juju cloth given to her at her birth) and called all the town to a meeting in which she told them her laws and rites, and that if they would abide to them she would stay with them and would bring Europeans to stay and trade with them. To this they consented. They began to notice that the least failure to abide to her laws brought fire, civil war and disorders of all kinds. She lived there for a long time, but the continual disordered state of things made the Old Calabarians to be tired of her, and to get rid of her they drove her away from the town. Then she sent for her brothers Akiya and Amanigio to take her down to New Calabar or Kalabari. During her stay there really Europeans came and traded with Old Calabar people.

' An angler one day went out for fishing and this woman asked him to take her with him, but he refused. He returned the second day and she asked him again to take her with him, and promised to do him good. The man took her and disembarked at Owupokku. She directly walked up to the house of one man, Alaso by name, and made her stay there. At her arrival Akiya and Amanigio returned to their town. She gave the New Calabar people the same laws and promised them trade with Europeans at the fulfilment. They agreed. The same disorders which happened at Old Calabar repeated themselves ; but the New Calabarians were then too few to drive her away.

' After a long stay there, she one day called the town and gave them warnings. She then wrapped herself with her okpokpointa cloth and went subterranean with her cloth, throne and everything with her.

'The use of that kind of cloth she was using, by any man, deprived him of his person (foreskin), and a woman with punishment of the most serious sickness which, if not done in right way, would result in death.

'She was a very powerful god, and all what she predicted happened.'

'Before her going into the earth she ordered a house to be built in her memory. This was done, and a slave, however rich, never entered the chamber covering the exact spot she went underneath.'

A queer little detail concerning the cult of Awome-Ka-So is that all shrines erected in her honour must—according to information given by Mr. A. C. Braide, of Bakana, and later confirmed from many sources—be finished between dawn and dusk. Should a hut, begun one morning, be incomplete when darkness falls, it must be pulled down and a fresh one started next day.

We were the first white people permitted to enter the principal shrine of the mysterious juju. This is a large hut at Buguma, in which the most sacred of the cult objects are carefully curtained from sight by overhanging palm-leaves mingled with those of marsh ferns, said to be among the first vegetation with which Ale, the Earth Goddess, decked herself when she came, swimming through the wide waste of waters, to found a resting-place, in life and death, for the children of earth and air.

In the midst of the hut lay a heap of great ivory tusks, many of them elaborately carved. The four finest, of which detailed sketches were fortunately made, have now, to the bitter grief of the townsfolk, disappeared. They were of beautiful workmanship, so ancient as to look at first sight as though carved from old boughs, wonderfully smooth and almost silver-grey in tone. Should the publication of the photographs and drawings lead to the identification of these stolen treasures—no matter how honestly come by—I would venture to beg that steps might at once be taken to restore them to the shrine from which they were originally filched. For these great carved tusks were the 'horns of the altar' to which malefactors could flee and after grasping which all,

KALABARI NDUEN FOBARA.
(*See p. 238.*)

THE CARVED IVORY TUSKS AT BUGUMA.
facing p. 76.

save those weighed down by blood-guilt, were safe from vengeance.

'Any man who runs to the house of a big juju will be safe, because the priest is sure to see him and call a meeting of the town. Only such men as have slain another cannot claim the protection of Awome-Ka-So; since, by her law, no blood may be shed. Even if a man has killed an enemy in battle, he must cleanse himself from the blood-guilt before daring to re-enter his house or approach his wife.'

Throughout Ibo country a slave may take refuge from ill-treatment by his master in any of the chief shrines; though, at other times, only the free-born may enter. Such a refugee becomes 'the slave of the juju.' As a general rule his owner was powerless to take him back; but in some cases he might be recaptured on payment of a fine to the priest. At Ibodo we saw an old woman who had tended the shrine of Amade Onhia for many years and was known by the name of Osu-Abara—juju's caretaker.

In some parts of the interior such refugees can go to market and take what they want without paying. No one dares to touch them, and it is thought that the blessing of the juju, to whose protection they have fled, will be shed upon the men thus despoiled. After living for some time in the shrine a slave might even go free; but could only return to his town at his own risk, for, once on his native heath, the protection of the juju was withdrawn and his master might recapture him.

At any very sacred place, like the grove surrounding Amade Onhia's shrine at Ozozo or in the bush near the sacred water at Tombia and Ngeri-Gbaw-Ama, no leaf may be picked. By no juju shrine may an animal be killed, save those brought thither for sacrifice, since it is thought that the juju might have disguised himself in this shape.

The spirits inhabiting the sacred phallic stones at Tombia are said to be the brother jujus Simingi and Tolofari. They are supposed to have come up from the sea, as are all stones found in this region. It is thought that 'powers dwell in the sacred stones which will bless their worshippers and protect them. Once every seven years the juju gives a play, at

which the images are chalked all over. Only full-grown rams may be offered in sacrifice on this occasion.

'There is a special snake called Adida, which is also worshipped at Tombia. This is said to be the wife of Simingi and may never be slain. Should any Oru-Kuru-Gbaw find one of these lying dead, she would give it burial just as the juju priests do for the Adumu serpents.'

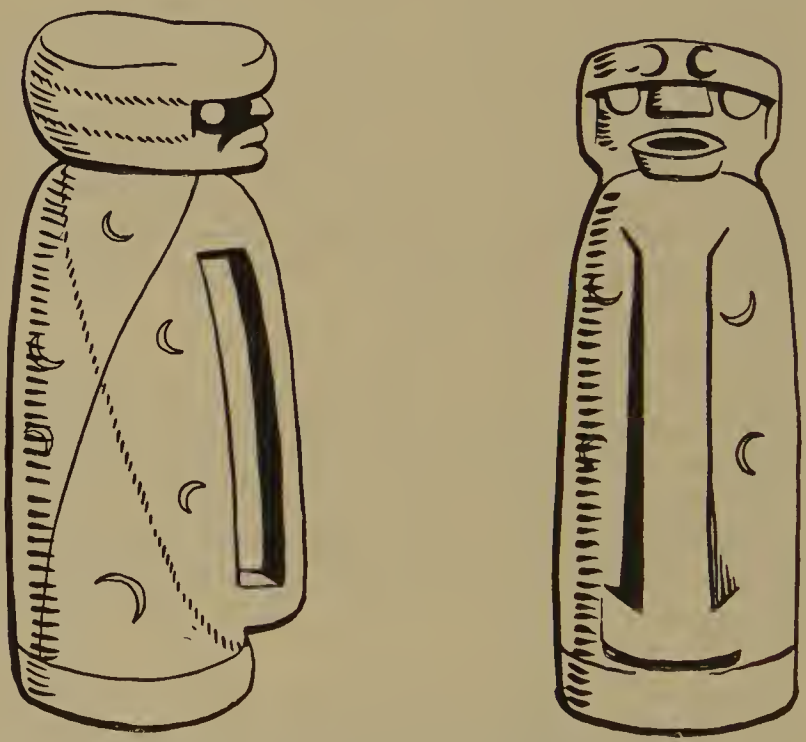


FIG. 5.—Wooden 'Mug' used to cover Juju Offerings and also to drink from. This particular one is used also at Onitsha in honour of the moon 'Alose,' at the feast of the digging up of new yams. At new moon it is held out at arm's length with offerings of crushed egg, kola and palm wine.

CHAPTER VI

Land Spirits (*continued*)

Next to Awome-Ka-So and the members of her family, perhaps the most widely known Kalabari juju is that which inhabits the sacred swamp at Oru-Sangama, known as Sangama Bu. This, strangely enough, is not regarded as an Owu but a land spirit. The dwelling-place of the Oru lies on the edge of the narrow strip of dry land which separates a small creek flowing into the Dumine River from the great swamp beyond. Thither criminals are brought, together with their accusers. (See Fig. 6, p. 91.)

Within the frail walls of mangrove fern, which fence in the shrine, is a smaller enclosure hedged about with the same leaves and containing jars of beautiful shape and old workmanship. Some are three-handled, some three-spouted, but all bear representations of serpent, crocodile or frog in high relief. Behind these, stretched between two posts and looking much like a magic-lantern screen, hangs a large square of white baft. Thither men are led before submitting to the ordeal; while the case for accuser and accused is recited in order that the juju may hear and give just judgment, when they venture forth together into the hidden depths of the dark swamp.

Outside the barrier a solitary post of mangrove wood is driven into the earth. Some six feet to the right of this an elaborately modelled water-jar is to be seen, three-mouthed and decorated with figures of the sacred snake, crocodile and lizard. Through the space between post and pot, accuser and accused must pass, hand in hand, out into the treacherous swamp beyond, where the juju lies in wait to suck down the guilty man, while the innocent one returns unharmed to land. Such is the ordeal of Sangama Bu.

Should a man's Chi become angry, the little bowl which represents the goddess is brought and laid before the great jar, so that the juju may entreat the Creatrix to put aside her anger and once more look favourably upon her worshippers. Near by a great heap of manillas testifies to those for whom the juju has successfully interceded.

At the town of Ke there is a juju house of a different type to any throughout the Division. Its roof is higher than most others, while it reaches near the ground—to within a yard indeed, save at the two entrances. This is the shrine of the powerful juju Keni-Ala, which was explained by the head chief as meaning 'Ala [Earth Goddess] of the Keni'; but, according to Mr. F. Braid, Ala was said to be not the Ibo word for ground but the Kalabari for chief. This latter view was supported by the fact that within the shrine were found some half-dozen carved stools (Osisi Nduen), the earliest form of representing the ancestors; and one of these was said to be, at one and the same time, the image of Keni-Ala and the Nduen Fobara of Omonie, the first King of Ke. Behind this was that of the second priestess, Dikinbi, the priestess of the Owu Ezi Wambada. There is a law that these stool images may never be set upon the ground.

The principal Okrikan juju is, as already mentioned, Fene-Be-So or Fene-Ma-So, the great war spirit. This demi-god was cruel and strong, symbolised by the leopard, and represented on carved stools (Ekase) as looking very fierce.

There were two shrines in his honour, painted in white, blue, pink and yellow—one in the bush and one in Okrika town. The principal ceremonies took place at the time of new yams, first in the forest shrine, after a watch-night had been held, and next in the juju house in the town. No one might eat new yams till all the rites had been duly observed.

According to some informants the chief sacrifice in the bush was that of a youth, who must be yellow-skinned and physically perfect, without spot or blemish. A rope was tied round his waist and he was taken out to the shrine, where he was impaled and there left to die. Next morning the priests went out to see what had taken place. It would be

found that his right arm had gone, taken by Fene-Be-So in the form of a leopard.

After an interval of four days the body was again visited and the left arm would have disappeared, then in turn his right leg and left leg. When the whole body had been taken, a great feast was held in the town of which he-goats and Agbara fish formed the special feature.

Should the order in which the limbs were taken ever vary from that as laid down, it was believed, by Fene-Be-So, it was regarded as a sign that some great evil would befall the town.

During the last fights over fishing rites with neighbouring Kalabari, the latter claim that sixteen of their number were captured and offered up to this juju. Chief Daniel Kalio, however, asserts that several of these ' victims ' were present, some six months later, at the feast of reconciliation held at Bakana. A well-known Kalabari chief stated as follows : ' When the Okrikans perform human sacrifices to Fene-Be-So, part of the flesh is given to the head chief, while the rest is taken to the juju house and shared out. For a while after the last King Ebani-Suku was deported by Government, cannibalism slacked a bit in this region ; but began again very strongly when the fishing palaver broke out.

' Some years ago Okrikans used to go fishing in Brass part. There they killed and ate a man. So the Brass people complained to Government, and that is the reason why many Okrikans now fear to enter Brass territories.'

To return to Fene-Be-So : a near relative of Daniel Kalio, the head chief of Okrika, a Christian, who had therefore no objection to giving information on the subject provided his name was not mentioned, said in October 1915 :

' Even now, on the nights when these ceremonies are performed, it is very dangerous for people to venture outside their house. Should a child happen to run out, there is little chance of his being seen again. The juju has only one proper priest. My word, Sir ! He is indeed great man for our country. The people treat him just like Archbishop ! He has many assistants, one of whom is called Fene-Ma-So Obiri, which means the dog of Fene-Ma-So, because, before

the ceremonies begin, he is sent out to bark all round the town.

'All the mischiefs and acts of wickednesses are done in a little hut in the bush. There they go to choose men who will not be too merciful and can be relied on not to tell anything. Either men or women could be caught for sacrifice on the special day. The duty of the "dog" was to bark round the whole town after they had come back from the cannibal feast. The "dog" himself was rubbed with chalk and went round ringing bells. He is a very big man that day; all men give way before him, while a dismal drum is played. While they beat this, the priest holds a spear in his right hand and a tusk in his left, with parrot plumes in his hair. He represents the juju himself and is looked upon as the embodiment of Fene-Be-So. While he dances he is looked upon as the juju dancing. He can go into any house. He is called Ada Su by the people into whose house he goes. They fear, but look upon it also as an honour. They call to him "Ada Su inya!" ["Lord defend us!"]. His attendants go with him, armed with swords and spears, looking into dark corners. They speak to any whom they meet, and if they answer in pure Okrikan no harm befalls them; but if he proves to be a stranger they catch him and drag him to the juju house, where they feast upon his flesh.

'In the bush there are many ceremonies to be performed to ensure the welfare of the town. Also, at this time they sacrifice rams.'

The cult is not confined to Okrikans. At the ancient Kalabari town of Kula, according to the testimony of Mr. A. C. Braide, human flesh was always eaten at the feast of Fene-Be-So. His account of the origin of this cult ran as follows:

'There was a certain chief who was very rich but had no child. He went to Long Juju to pray for piccan. The spirit answered: "Should a son be sent, he will ruin your house." The chief replied: "No matter for that! I will spend all my money, if need be, in sacrifice to persuade Chuku to grant me a child."

'Long time he prayed and sacrificed. At length the

longed for boy arrived. He was born with a matchet in his hand. So soon as he began to grow, he started cutting off people's heads and drinking their blood. The townspeople got angry and claimed that he should be killed. His father warned him that, if he would not leave off this habit, evil would come of it. On that he cut off the old chief's head, jumped into a canoe and paddled off, taking the head to Kula.

'In the end, he and all his family became vultures and were worshipped in those parts.'

The following account of the founders of Okrika, who appear to be jointly commemorated at the ceremonies of this juju, was given in manuscript form by Chief Sampson Adoki. It is written in English so far superior to that of ordinary documents that it has been possible to leave spelling and phraseology unchanged.

The Origin of Okrika

'A woman named Tumuniaro had a son named Opu-Siko and a daughter Sangataro. [They were] dwelling in Oko-Piri, a place near to the Mbolli people on the eastern side of the present Okrika town.

'The husband of Tumuniaro [1] was a fisherman by trade. This man and wife with their children lived in this place happily, and often went to fishing in the neighbourhood.

'One day a stranger was seen at the water-side. . . . The look and attitude of the [new-]comer were so fierce and bold that Sangataro, the daughter of Tumuniaro, who [had] come to draw water [in] a calabash, had to run away in fear and threw down the water-pot.

'She reported the incident to the parents and impressed on their hearts fear and doubt that the strange man she saw [was] a spirit or other supernatural being. Notwithstanding this, the son [Opu-Siko], in a manly spirit, went down with the mother to see the stranger at the water-side. He

[1] The husband of Tumuniaro was named Oko. The land on which they lived was therefore called Oko's bush. It is suggestive that the human headed pots for the reception of offerings to the ancestors are also termed Oko.

[carried] a fowl and the woman took her charm article, to pacify the man [of] whom they are so much in dread.

'The stranger, they saw, had a human head in his [left] hand and a cutlass in his right hand. He had on a hat called Ibuli.[1] At the first glance of [this] man the mother, with her charms, pacified him and the son cut the neck of the fowl [which] he had in his hand and strew the blood on the eyes of the man. Then the man [became] domicile and was admitted to the family where the woman and her family were living. This man's name was Fene-Ma-So—a deserted man from his own native town.'

(Here Chief Sampson Adoki had added, and afterwards erased, the words 'called Teme.' Now 'Teme,' as later explained, is the Kalabari word signifying soul, shadow or last breath, and therefore in this case perhaps signifies the ghost- or sky-realm. The narrative continues :)

'Fene-Ma-So was the first born in his family circle and was granted a special right of eating solely of the head of every and any animal or fish.

'As time went on Fene-Ma-So had grown to manhood when, one day while he was away on business, a certain fish-head made into feast as [was] the custom of the people on behalf of [his] sister, was eaten by her. [On his return] Fene-Ma-So requested this fish head and, on enquiry, he was told that his sister had eaten it. On hearing this he took his cutlass and beheaded the sister. [Then] Taking [her] head, he deserted house and native land and that was reason he came to this water-side at Oko-Piri.

'[Afterwards] Fene-Ma-So, being a warlike man, always waged war on the neighbour Mbolli and thereby caused war and discontentment among the people [with whom] he lodged. As this discontentment and uneasiness increase the husband and wife, among whom he stayed, resolved to emigrate to another place. [So] As to avoid the worrisome life caused by Fene-Ma-So.

'The woman went to fishing one day and while travelling on the meadow she saw smoke rising out [of the] bush, not very far from where she stood.

[1] A head covering of palm-leaf, such as is worn by juju images.

'When she returned home, she told her husband and son of the smoke . . . which, she added, [must] have been [from the dwelling] of someone else, and urged her family to make up their mind to transfer to that place, instead of living here together with the troublesome and peevish man like Fene-Ma-So.

'Few days after this conference, the man and his wife went to survey the place and came to the dwelling of a man named Opu-Tibiya in the bush where the present Okrika town is situated.

'Opu-Tibiya was working his fishing material when these visitors appeared. He, being full of dread, was mute at their first appearance. The visitors also did not give him salutation. Both parties were afraid of being killed by each other, until [at length] Tumuniaro saluted and asked Opu-Tibiya to welcome them. She furthermore asked that [he] should allow them to stay with him. [To] This Opu-Tibiya consented and gave them a piece of land to build on.

'Tumuniaro and husband [then] returned to their former home and took all their belongings and family and came over to Opu-Tibiya. Fene-Ma-So did not allow himself to be [left] behind, [but] followed them and came over also to reside.

'These settlers and their subsequent offspring were the origin of the present Okrika people. Tumuniaro, finding that she can carry on her trade and living, in fishing and so on, exclaimed :

'"This place is no different from our former settlement!" which gave the name to the present Okrika town, [for] "Krike" means "no difference."

'As I said before, Fene-Ma-So came with them and he, being a brave and warlike man, earned such a bold and noble position among his fellow settlers that, in any important affair, he [was] first consulted and any decision given by him [was] considered final. Such [was] the nobility and dreadful admiration and respect given to Fene-Ma-So, that on the day of his death, he summoned the townspeople and adjured them that, from the day he is no more seen on earth he should be adored. [Also] Whenever the date of his

departure [came] round there should be an annual ceremony. [At] This a human being must be sacrificed and the head be placed in his tomb [both] as a memorial sign of the head of his sister whom he beheaded. And of himself as a warrior.

'As tradition says, this man, immediately he ended his speech, was swallowed up in the ground. The unnatural way of his death excited the people and deeply impressed on them the belief and adherence to all the words he spoke before. . . . And so it happened, whenever the season of his death comes, a human being is sacrificed and the skulls added to decorate his temple.

'The frequent doing of this act gave rise to the former idol Fene-Ma-So, because this man is worshipped as a deity and his memorial ceremonies gave rise to the cannibalism of Okrika.'

There the manuscript ends; but Chief Sampson added the following information by word of mouth:

'There are two ways of offering man or woman to Fene-Ma-So. One of these is called Ekaki (Tortoise) because the victim is sacrificed just like tortoise—viz. by a stake driven through the head and out below the body. This is forced deep down into the earth, thus pinning him upright before the god. Later the head is struck off and borne back to be placed in the memorial shrine at Okrika, but the headless trunk remains. No one dares touch it; so bone drops from bone, because it is an offering sacred to the god.'

The following information is combined from the narratives of Mr. I. B. Cole, native minister of the Niger Delta Pastorate Church, and Chief Sampson Adoki:

'The sacrifice was made at the time of new yams, and the manner of catching a victim was secret and crafty. A fine canoe was prepared which was rowed down a creek between here and Asakaw till it came to the site of the old Okrikan settlement Oko-Piri, where Fene-Ma-So sought refuge and from which came the founders of our race. In this canoe the doomed man paddled. He was usually a slave, or prisoner lately captured from another race; but well fed and finely dressed in preparation for this event. When the appointed spot was reached, the paddlers sprang into the water, crying

that the canoe must be pulled ashore. The doomed man drew with the rest, but two men stood at either end of a rope cunningly laid beneath the water. At the right moment they ran swiftly apart, pulling the rope, and the hidden loop caught the feet of the victim, who was thus dragged under. At once a great shout was raised : " The god has caught him ! " Thereupon he was drawn ashore, with great rejoicing and impaled as above described.

' Afterwards all went back to the feast at the house of the juju, where many men were slain, roasted and eaten. Even now, very few people pass willingly near that place.'

The other way of making sacrifice to Fene-Ma-So was merely to strike off the heads of captives or strangers and add these to the memorial shrine in Okrika town, while the bodies were eaten.

This shrine was destroyed by order of Government about 1897. According to the authorities above mentioned and the former pastor, the Rev. J. A. Pratt, of Opobo, all of whom knew it well : ' This place was full of human skulls, with which also the chair of the juju priest, King Ebanisuku, was outlined. Two skulls were fixed thereon for hand rests, while two others decorated his footstool.

' In this house there was always a supply of human flesh. At almost any time, when passing by, you could look in and see old men pounding the meat. All prisoners taken in war were eaten there, bones and all.' The bones were ground up and mixed with other food with the idea, it is said, that total destruction of the body would prevent the spirit of the slain from ever coming back to earth.

Perhaps the most interesting information with regard to this terrible cult was jointly supplied by Bishop Johnson and the Rev. J. A. Pratt, both of whom have known, and laboured in, Okrika for many years. It was of peculiar interest to us on account of the striking resemblance between the ceremonies they described and those of the great Ibibio Secret Society Idiong.[1] According to their information, Fene-Ma-So, ' bird of the sky,' is the vulture spirit, the king of birds. He is supposed to show himself to his worshippers

[1] See *Life in Southern Nigeria.*

in the form of a giant vulture and, when sacrifice is made to him, the priests always stand by, watching until they see some of these unclean birds drawing near. So soon as the first appears a cry of joy is raised : ' Our sacrifice is accepted ! '—after which they go away. Usually there is not long to wait.

It is owing to the influence of the Niger Delta Pastorate Mission, and especially to the initiative of Chief Sampson Adoki, that this blot was finally cast out from among the Okrikans at the end of 1915 with full approval of the paramount chief Daniel Kalio and most of the sub-chiefs and people. The juju objects were collected throughout the town and either made into a great bonfire or cast upon the water. The only surviving figure of the famous juju which escaped the perils of flood and flame was an elaborately carved image which floated down stream to find refuge on the beach of Miller Brothers' factory. Thence, through the courtesy of the Agent, Mr. J. Hay Denniston, it found its way to our collection and is now in the British Museum. It may therefore be hoped that cannibalism has now been wiped out from Okrika, though the present pastor, Mr. I. B. Cole, confided to us with many shakes of the head his suspicion that : ' perhaps some hardy-headed old things may still meet and stealthily carry on the practice in narrow creeks.'

The festival of Fene-Be-So was called Alali-fi (' juju celebrate '). The only other Okrikan celebration to which this name was given was that of the rites of the powerful juju Ogonyo Alali, who was credited with the power of killing dangerous Owu Amapu. When a stick, tied round with palm-leaves, was placed in the river near the haunt of the offending water spirits and Ogonyo's name was invoked, the Owu Amapu was stated to die at once. The festival of this juju took place at the new yam season, and it was believed that anyone who imitated the priest would become a hunchback or perish.

Besides those already given there are many lesser Kalabari jujus, among which may be mentioned :

Angula-Ama Normu Awaw, a juju which has its shrine at

Angula-Ama, and when invoked against people drives them crazy.

Ongiugiu, whitlow juju. This has no special shrine, but anyone can invoke it on an enemy.

Ekarakara-ba, *i.e.* 'white ants' daughter.' This is the white ant (termite) juju, invoked to destroy the property of any man whom it is sought to injure. The Ibo name for this termite is Anwawu. They live in the big ant-hills called Nkpu by both Ibo and Kalabari.

Erise, the spirit of the tornado wind.

So-Alagba, *i.e.* 'sky-gun.' This is the Kalabari thunder and lightning juju, fallen almost into disuse since the adoption, by this people, of the powerful Ibo cult Amade-Onhia. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the first guns seen in this part were called by the same word as that used to express the roar and flash of the celestial artillery, *i.e.* 'alagba.'

Orumu, the fire spirit. This is invoked against enemies, with the prayer that a 'great blaze' may burn down their houses.

Laga-Ba, *i.e.* 'needle kill' or 'May needle kill you!' This is a special curse pronounced against tailors. It is, naturally, quite a modern juju.

Hell-Fenni, *i.e.* 'hell fire'—invoked by so-called Christians on those who have displeased them. Two somewhat similar jujus are those of 'Bible' and 'Sin.' A case in which the latter were invoked came before the Degama Native Court on October 24, 1912. In this the plaintiff, Daba Batubo, stated on oath:

'The accused, Gillis Prince Batubo, was my lover. Some time ago I left him. Two months ago he beat drum at Buguma calling my name and invoking Bible and Sin against any person who knew that I was marrying a man. He said Bible should swell the person, Sin should belong to that person, and the person must not prosper in all that he may do.'

Alfred Prince Batubo stated on oath:

'Two months ago at Buguma I heard defendant beat drum and call the complainant's name. He said any person

who knew that complainant had married a man should say it. He invoked Bible and Sin that the person should not prosper in whatever he did.'

Among the Brass Ijaw the most powerful juju is Igidiga, which is especially invoked in time of war. No youths or slaves are allowed to approach his shrine. In the Warri region Tata, whose symbol is a large stone and whose principal festival is held at the New Year, is the dominant salt-water juju.

In choosing a juju priest, Kalabari and Ibo customs are in sharp contrast; for, whereas among the latter people *none* but the head chief of a town can aspire to the office of priest to its principal juju, among the former *no chief* can become a juju priest. The only exception known to this rule is mentioned on page 118. There is also a law among Kalabari that a priest does not pay bride price for any woman he may wish to wed. All marriage expenses are defrayed for him by the town. A case of some interest, in the course of which these rules were cited, came before Degama Native Court on December 8, 1911. In this, Chief Sydney Standfast Jack stated on oath:

'Defendant's father was a juju priest (So-Alagbo, *i.e.* "Sky King," late head priest of Awome-Ka-So). . . . A juju priest's properties on his death belong to the town. Defendant was one of the properties, and was accordingly given to Jim Standfast's House. [Then, addressing the plaintiff:]

'You are the son of a juju priest and not of a chief. Being a juju priest, he could not be a chief. Your grandfather Karibo was not a chief of the House: Orika, the father of Karibo, was a chief. I don't know if your father had money of his own before he became a juju priest.'

Chief Frank Bestman stated on oath:

'No chief can be a juju priest. The defendant's father was the last real juju priest. When such a man dies, the people come and perform ceremonies and take all articles of the priest from his house. Children born before he was made a juju priest belong to the House he belongs to, and children born after he became a priest go back with their mothers to their own families, as town money was used (*i.e.*

for the dowry). A juju priest's actual properties belong to the town. Charley was born after his father was made a juju priest, and therefore belonged to his mother's—*i.e.* Horsfall's—House. Horsfall claimed him after his father's death.'

The following information concerning the choice of an Alagbo was given by at least seven of the leading Kalabari :

' Some people liked to become juju priests and some did not. Those people, whose family was unconnected with a particular juju, would not like to be chosen to serve it, as a general rule, because of the restrictions imposed. For instance, once elected a priest, a man might not go alone to market or might be called upon to carry out juju ceremonies at a time when he wanted to see after his own private affairs.

' In olden days, while choosing a juju priest, men used to strike him on the head. First they seized him and dragged him to the juju house, before which they hit him, saying : " To-day we give blows, because this is the last time we shall be able to do so ; for, from to-morrow, you will be sacred and we can never mock you nor ill-treat you again." '

No priest may eat new yams until the ceremonies proper to his juju have been performed. This is also the case with any person possessed of special ' medicines ' ; because, it is said, to break the rule would deprive them of virtue. Even ordinary men may not eat of the new season's crops until the festival of the dominant town juju has been held.

Fig. 6.—The Juju of Sangama Bu. (See p. 79.)

CHAPTER VII

Land Spirits (*continued*)

One evening, when staying in the rest-house at Omo-Akani, an Ibo town in Owerri District, Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow came to say that he had heard of a woman's juju, named Ogugu, the shrine of which was near at hand. Our informant began :

' Ogugu is the chief juju of the women of this country, and is very powerful for the granting of children. When a woman wants piccan, she takes eggs and tombo to the priest, asking him to lead her into the bush where the sacred tree is. Before it stand two iron bars, native pots, large and small, and cowries plenty too much ! When the tombo has been poured out and the eggs offered, the woman prays : " Help me to get children. If you do this, I will pay you a he-goat." After the babe is born, she buys a fine goat and cuts its ear as a mark that all men may know. Then she sets it free in the bush, and no one will touch such a beast, because it is juju. Also, there are many monkeys in this town. Even to-day these are known as servants of Ogugu and walk about, sacred like the goats, entering into people's houses. No one drives them away.

' If anyone promise something to the juju and fail to give this, or swear on its name but does not carry out the thing, Ogugu always sends visitors to remind that person. Big snakes she sends to lie across the threshold of the house. At midnight, one will creep into bed, or coil by the head of the sleeper. Never, never does such a messenger leave again until the promise has been fulfilled.

' The name of the priest of this juju is Asor. He lives in Chief Wokogg's compound and wears a dress of white cloth.

THE JUJU OKUNO-AGBA, KWALE IBO.

NOTICE PHALLIC CHALKS BETWEEN THE FEET OF THE CENTRAL FIGURE.

facing p. 92.

Between us and that place lies the bush, and not far off is the tree where the juju dwells. The power of Ogugu is shown by the many piccans born to our town.'

A few miles off, at Obogwe, we came upon a double Mbari house, raised in joint honour to the Thunder God, Amade Onhia, and his consort the Earth Goddess. Here, amid a multitude of figures which adorn the two shrines, one is to be seen depicting the unhappy fate of a woman who had broken a promise pledged upon the name of the juju. A python is modelled, entwining the body of the perjurer, whose arms are raised above her head, either in horror at sight of this terrible reminder of broken vows or in pledge of amendment.

A reference to Ogugu is contained in some information given by Mr. B. M. Pepple : ' Wiyeke is a female juju of Akwete, who is also honoured at Ohambele now. She came on purpose to marry Ogugu, who was one of the big female jujus there. [It is the custom with Ohambele people and all Ndoki tribe in Aba District for female to marry female.[1]] Ogugu agreed to become Wiyeke's wife on condition that the latter would come to live with her at Ohambele. To this Wiyeke agreed, and that is how she became one of the Ohambele jujus.

' Ogugu is also worshipped by the Kalabari women. Its symbol is a clay pot of water, which is placed in a corner of the house and before which Deke and Abila fish, together with green plantains, are offered, while at the same time yams are placed in sacrifice on the threshold of the house.

' Perhaps the most powerful juju in the Aba region is the great Ikuru drum, one of which is worshipped in every large town, though the smaller villages are forbidden to have one of their own. Human sacrifices were always offered up to this juju.[2] At Ohambele the play falls twice a year ; the first, Mkpukpuchi (thanksgiving), at the harvest, and the second, Omehie Ogugu (remembrance of Ogugu), at the planting of farms.'

Nearly all jujus throughout the length and breadth of the

[1] See p. 195.

[2] For further information see p. 319, and *Some Nigerian Fertility Cults*, p. 2 *et seq.*

land are connected, directly or indirectly, with the ever-present longing to increase fertility, by supernormal means, in farm, byre and, above all, by the hearth.

There is a special class of juju named Ibudu, represented under the form of pillars, varying from plain, cone-shaped mounds of sun-dried clay to elaborately decorated figures and groups of men and animals. The avowed purpose of nearly all is given as : ' for protection and to bring plenty piccans.' There are so many varieties of Ibudu, and the rites are so closely connected with worship of the Earth Goddess Ale, the Thunder God Amade Onhia, and countless subsidiary cults of farms and crops, such as those of the yams and new corn, that it was found necessary to deal with these separately.[1]

An elaborated type of Ibudu is that known as Ezu(m) Mezu(m), which seems to have originated among Abaw Ibo, where it is still the dominant juju, though its worship has now spread far to east and south. This is regarded as a powerful protection against witchcraft, especially evil charms for the endangering of children and pregnant women. It is therefore looked upon as the special protector of piccans.

The first shrine of this juju was found in the courtyard of the Aro chief Ogunda at the Azu-Miri (' overside water ') quarter of Nkarahia. The following is his account :

' Ezu(m) Mezu(m) is set up for the protection and prosperity of all within the compound. It is a woman spirit, very powerful for the sending of piccans.

' The two paddles shown, one to the right and one to the left of the central figure, are for the ferrying out and in of souls at birth and death. With the gun the juju drives all evil things out of the compound.'

The small cone-shaped pieces of chalk at the base of the figure are phallic symbols, carved and brought by mothers as thank-offerings after the birth of a piccan.

On either side of the door were two traps, set there to help the juju catch all evil influences which might try to enter the compound and harm its inhabitants.

[1] *Some Nigerian Fertility Cults.*

PHALLIC PILLARS MADE BY THE WOMEN OF UMO ABALE.

IBUDU AT OMO-CHUKU.

IBUDU NWA AT ALE BARADA.

IKWERRI IBO.

facing p. 94.

A similar figure, bearing the name of Ommu-Ommu (' birth-giving '), was later found in the compound of Chief Agu-Acha at Omo Akani. Here, instead of paddles, a small canoe was provided for the use of the outgoing and incoming souls ; while, on either side, at the feet of the central image are placed two quaint little figures, one male and the other female. These were explained as ' the servants of the juju,' before whom was fastened the symbolic hoe of Ale.

Next in importance to the fertility cults, among Ibo at least, Ojuku, the smallpox juju, appears to rank. Kalabari call this disease by the name of So-Ommu (' sky-war ') ; but with them, as a general rule, the cult is not held in special reverence. With Ibo, on the contrary, the many shrines of Oga-n'Elu (' that which walks above ') strewn over the length and breadth of the land bear witness to the power of this terrible scourge. Sometimes these are set in bush clearings, sometimes in the form of Ibudu by the way-side and sometimes again within the walls of compounds or farm-settlements. From many sources throughout Ibo territory statements varying in name and date but, in all essentials, identical with the following were made :

' Smallpox was very bad in our country. About 1895 or 1897 and again in 1909 it was terribly severe in Omokoroshi part. Native doctors told the people to build shrines in honour of the juju so that their lives might be saved.'

In the neighbourhood of Iba, when smallpox broke out, palm-leaf images were set up in the town in the hope that the disease might enter these and spare the people. A similar custom was found to prevail among the Ododop tribe at Ekkonnanakku, Oban District.[1]

At Ogbokoro, between Ewawfe and Isoba, a typical smallpox shrine may be seen, hung with yard upon yard of white cloth, in places sodden or stiff with blood, in others only lightly streaked. The chief of the compound, a stately enough figure in his long robe of blue velvet, hung with chains of agate and silver, plainly showed the ravages of this terrible disease which, before the coming of white rule and

[1] *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 276.

consequent enforcement of simple sanitary precautions, raged like fire throughout the region.

At Oppe, a group of farm settlements belonging to the Mbolli, separated from Alessa by a Mimbo swamp tenanted by sacred crocodiles, an Ojuku shrine may be seen, set up within the house of its priestess. The latter was a youngish woman, so cumbered by the weight of her enormous anklets, which reached from foot to knee, that she could hardly stagger out of the dark little chamber where she carries out the rites of the terrible juju.

The weight of the metal was kept from cutting into the swollen flesh by folds of cloth hidden, as well as might be, beneath the lower coils. Every limb twitched as she moved, and her eyelids flickered ceaselessly. We thought that perhaps she was afraid to be photographed, but were assured by the bystanders, among whom was her husband, a middle-aged chief, that the reason of her curious behaviour was that she was about to prophesy.

Unfortunately, our guide, the local minister and school-teacher, felt called upon, at this point, to fall into a violent fit of laughter. It is unnecessary to add that this unfortunate occurrence put an end to the pythic frenzy of the priestess, whose trembling is reported always to precede the announcement of oracles.

Outside Oduaha-Omo-Ekkpe an Ojuku Ibudu may be seen beneath a little hut by the roadside. This is spotted with pink and white paint, while driven into its chest are five small pegs as reminders of the special claims of those who raised it. The sharply pointed hoe handles fixed round the mud base are to ' hook the disease ' and hold it fast, so that it should not pass on into the town to harm any of the inhabitants.

It is said that the smallpox ' medicine ' has power to heal all who are attacked by the disease. Only from evil men will the juju withhold its aid. Death from this sickness is, therefore, thought proof positive that the deceased had been a great, though possibly secret, sinner. It may be that some such belief lies at the back of the Kalabari rule that no image may be set among the Nduen Fobara for a chief who

THE CHIEF OF NDELLE, IKWERRI IBO.

(See p. 252.)

THE PRIESTESS OF OPPE.

facing p. 96.

died of this disease. Only an empty arbour-like shrine may be raised to such, while his body must be thrown away on the special ground called Nonji. One of these places is by 'Old Shipping' in Si Okolo ('bad creek'). This itself is looked upon as juju and occasionally invoked against enemies. An instance of this came up in the Degama Native Court on October 23, 1912, when Ojiri Charles Horsfall was charged with invoking Nonji and Ogboloma jujus on Miller C. Horsfall. The curse of Ojuku herself is often invoked against an enemy who is specially hated. This is more usual with Ibo than Kalabari; but even with the latter it is by no means rare. Case No. 851/12, heard at Degama, may be cited as typical. In this, Dokku Fred Horsfall was charged with invoking smallpox, among other jujus, against Segbeba Tiger Amakiri at Opuru Ama. The prosecutor, Segbeba, stated on oath:

'Accused and her mother fought with me. I hit accused's mother with a stick and wounded her on the head. I was imprisoned on account of that. The accused invoked the spirits of dead people and smallpox against me. This was in the plantations, four months ago.'

When Ojuku is thought to have shown special animus against any family, an attempt is often made to placate him by dedicating one of the sons or daughters to his service. An instance of this came before the Omokoroshi Court on April 24, 1915. In the course of the evidence it was stated:

'The reason no dowry was paid for the woman was that she was given to the Ojuku priest, because Ojuku had avenged himself upon our house by killing many men among us.'

Ada, the girl in question, then produced a piece of withered palm, saying:

'This is the young palm-leaf that was tied round my neck when I was given to the juju.'

Ojuku is also much in demand to enforce the payment of debts. An example of this came before the same court on August 22, 1912. The prosecutor, Mboru, stated on oath:

'About nine days ago Omeodu came into my house with a juju named Ojuku, in order to demand a debt which, he

said, was due to him from my husband, but of which I knew nothing. He seized from me three fathoms of cloth and one hat. The cap produced is the one that Ojuku people always use.'

Inawuke stated on oath :

'I was present about nine days ago, when the accused went into prosecutor's house. The red cap produced is the uniform of Ojuku members.'

Ojuku is worshipped among the Mbolli under the name of Nda Owa, and sacrifices are made in his honour once a year about the time of new corn, at the beginning of the rains. Another juju among this people at Asakura is called Ejelle. 'If a man has a palaver with another man, or a wife or slave think themselves badly treated, they can run there for protection. If there is a dispute about land or other property, one of the disputants can say : "I will give the thing to Ejelle." Then neither can touch it, unless the man who gave it to the juju sets the property free again by making sacrifice.'

Another interesting class of protective juju is that known as Ikenga. This is represented in a confusing variety of shapes ; but, so far as our experience goes, it must, if not itself horn-shaped, somewhere bear the representation of a horn, usually of a pair—either upon the head, as in most of these imp-like little fetishes, or in relief upon the surface, as was the case with a small stool belonging to the head chief of Idu water-side.[1] The word itself means that part of the right arm from shoulder to elbow. The right hand is often called Aka Ikenga, *i.e.* 'hand of the Ikenga' ; the other expression being Aka Nri, *i.e.* 'food hand.' As a general rule, these fetishes are small and made in shapes which seem designed for the purpose of being easily portable. Such were the two little ones found in a smithy at Obufie among the Okoba Ibo of Ahoada District. These were described as blacksmiths' mascots : 'Good for bring plenty money and keep off all bad things.' (See Fig. 8, p. 107.)

[1] There is possibly some connection with the 'horns' of the crescent moon, and even with the Cretan double-headed axe worship ; *vide The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. II, p. 141 *et seq.*

The little horned imp found among the Etche people is used to hold in the hand at night-time, when necessity takes one abroad.

According to the testimony of Amuneke of Owerri, in order to render it efficacious, alligator peppers, *i.e.* seeds from the cherry-coloured fruit of the wild ginger (*Aframomum grana paradisi*), must be taken and pounded or chewed, together with a ' small, small chicken. This should be done by a native doctor and the medicine rubbed over the Ikenga. Afterwards, the image must be held tightly in the hand all the time a man is out in the dark. So long as this is done, no one can trouble him ; no thief attack him. If, on the other hand, he himself has gone out thieving, it will make him invisible. Even in a house with a lighted lamp, he can take what he will, yet remain unseen.

' There is another Ikenga, which is brother to this one. It is a long horn, very useful in war-time or against private enemies. If you hold this out in your hand, pointing steadily before you, it will move of its own power to right or left, showing the safe road. If it does not move but points steadily forward, it means that no danger lies ahead and you can pass on without fear. If it turns right round, there is danger on all sides. Then there is no help. That man must go back.'

Another object used among Etche Ibo for much the same purpose is that known as Ebi and called by educated negroes ' native compass.' . This is an egg-shaped mass, formed of clay and tie-tie, out of which a small horn projects ; the oval part being just large enough to lie in the palm of the hand. It is much used by thieves and other bad characters to point out where desired wealth is stored, or the direction in which safety lies ; but may be resorted to by honest men to show the way towards any place they wish to reach. It is indicative of the state of mind of the juju destroyers, who went round overthrowing their neighbours' idols, that they made use of an Ebi to disclose the places in which such might be found.

The Edima is a section of palm midrib, over a yard in length, which is used to point out the whereabouts of stolen

goods. To one end a small tree, torn up by the roots, is bound. Both are then 'purified' by means of seven alligator peppers, which are first rubbed thereon and the seeds afterwards taken into the mouth of the Onye-Dibia and thence spat out over the Edima; after which a cock is slain and tied to the centre. Two men stand, one behind the other, each holding an end of the palm stalk. They may have to wait for hours, though usually an influence is said to be felt before long, which jerks the pole impishly at intervals as if seeking to tear it from their hands. If they still hold fast, the impulses suddenly become too strong for them to withstand and will start dragging them forward and infallibly indicate the spot where the stolen property lies hidden. This was once tried by Chief G. A. Yellow and his brother, in order to find out the whereabouts of some palm-oil stolen from Isokpo market. It is said to have proved completely efficacious.

Among most Ibo of this region, the rites of Afa ('the year'), or, as sometimes pronounced, Afor, are celebrated at harvest time in connection with those of the ancestors of Chi and of Ale. At this feast, goats, sheep and fowls are killed for the family ghosts, and the blood thrown upon the ground.

Afa appears to hold greater power among Etche Ibo, to the north-east of Degama District, than with any other tribe of the Division. In passing through this region during August 1915, we noticed half pumpkins placed almost continuously upon the yam mounds on either side of the road, where this led through farm lands. Wherever a boundary path branched off from the main track, the mounds on either side never failed to show these half fruits. Sometimes a broken calabash was placed there in addition; while, at others, one filled with water was fixed in the earth near by.

Round Afara we found a line of broken calabashes and green pumpkins laid across not only the main roads, but every little bush-path leading to the town. This also was said to be done in honour of the Afa juju, so that evil, approaching from any direction, might be caught on sherds or fruit and so be unable to enter.

Between Iba and Elele miniature market baskets were

seen, raised upon forked sticks by the road-side. These were filled with palm kernels, pumpkins pierced with arrows and other offerings, all set out in sacrifice to Afa.

In speaking of local rites, Chief Wa-Oyike of Elele, head priest of the corn juju, said : ' When new corn grows ripe, we cut it and bear it home. Beside the feast held in my house to the corn spirit, the girls of each compound perform special ceremonies for Afa. They dress fine and dance, holding branches in their hands ; then boil corn and eat it with fish. Afterwards the withered boughs are thrown in a certain place while the dancers cry : " May all trouble be taken from us for the year ! " '

Obi Amara related that, in former days, among Awka Ibo, dried corn-stalks were always held in the hand on such occasions. This custom extends right up to the Tuburi Lakes, in French Central Africa, where at Youe we once witnessed the dance of the maize harvest.

In many towns throughout this Division, where the Afa juju holds sway, the inhabitants go out at night-time bearing old corn-cobs, firewood and broken calabashes to a place ordained for the throwing away of these things. Arrived there, each passes what he carries thrice round his head, then flings it from him, bidding all trouble pass away therewith.

A similar ceremony called Ogu is held at Ogamine Ndelle just before the planting of new farms. In February 1916 we chanced to pass through while the rites were in progress. To the accompaniment of a plantain xylophone danced a band of youths, strips of young palm tied round their necks and plantain-leaf wands in their hands. Later they were joined by a group of girls dressed in brightly coloured fringed cloths, their bodies painted with black designs, and also wearing palm-leaf neck ornaments. These danced in an outer ring round the youths, their bodies inclined towards the latter. With Owerri Ibo the corresponding festivities are said usually to be held about July.

Among ' Bush Abonnema ' people, a settlement of freed Egenni slaves, a feast called Oggu (' year ') is held about

Christmas time. To join in this, the 'fatting house' girls come out from seclusion. The juju 'image' wears no mask, but is covered from crown to foot by palm-leaves. It announces to the assembled people whether the coming season will be good or bad as regards crops and fishing.

This corresponds to the old Kalabari juju Amade Alali, now practically extinct. The festival was held towards the end of the year. Native doctors came shaking rattles, while all men, women and children ran round the town, waving fresh palm, or Odumdum leaves, and shouting: 'Sie saw' ('bad things come out'). After the whole town had been 'purified' in this manner, the leaves were thrown into the river to float away upon the waters, bearing with them all evil from the town.[1]

Native doctors are usually credited with the power of driving bad things into the water. An instance of this was given in Abua Court Case No. 1/1915.

Another method of driving away disease is to erect the mud figure of a man holding a gun or sword. These are called Pokobia by Kalabari, and are set up by Ibo doctors on their behalf at the water-side.

Onita is a vegetation spirit, held in great esteem among Ndonni Ibo to the north of Abaw. Its home is in a great tree in the bush near Ishu-Okwa. Monitor lizards are sacred to this cult and, as at Bonny, in olden days any man found guilty of injuring one of these reptiles was put to death by beheading. They are still worshipped by the Ijaw of Forcados District, where in many villages the scarcity of eggs was put down to their depredations.

At Olakwo, in the Etche country, a little hut was to be seen built over three beautifully modelled pots and one of the slim-necked big-bellied pottery drums much in use among Ikwerri Ibo women. This shrine was said to be raised to the juju Ndemm—an old friend from among the Ibibio—the spirit of trees, sacred places and fresh water. The people were very vague as to the origin and attributes of this juju; indeed, the only account they could give was: 'Our fathers

[1] This is quite distinct from the ceremony at the end of the cycle of Owu plays, p. 312.

told us that this was a powerful spirit. Therefore we raise its shrine according to their orders.'

The presence of Ndemm among Etche Ibo, like that of Mbiam among Ekoi, is another proof of far-reaching Ibibio influence.

According to the testimony of Chief G. A. Yellow and several Ibo : 'We regard Ibibio people as the first ever made by Chi. Therefore they know more than other races of ancient knowledge concerning the making of the world, the coming of the first men and the secrets of the gods.'

In many parts, especially among Ikwerri Ibo near Elele Alimini, Onitsha Ibo of Ogu in the extreme north-west of Ahoada, and the Igabo Sobo, to the south of Abaw, the Offor (or Offaw) juju holds rank as next in power to Chi and Ale.

Concerning this cult, Chief Wenna of Elele Alimini stated as follows :

'Among our people, every head of a compound has an Offor stick, which lies before his juju shrine in the day-time, but is placed by his head at night to ward off all bad things. The Offor-na-Obochi tree is the oldest of those which grow in our bush. From it the Offor sticks are cut, and this juju is thought by us to be also oldest of all after the great gods. It is like a son of Ale. This tree was the first which she ever brought to Elele Alimini country.

'When Ale is angry against a man, he must cut a piece of this stick and lay it before her shrine, making sacrifice to appease her ; after which she may forgive the offender.

'When people wish to injure a man, they send a piece of this wood to his house, and in four days, at latest, it will begin to harm that person either by sickness or other grave misfortune.'

Our informant had come to complain of a trouble which had overtaken himself on this very account. According to his statement, a fellow-townsman, named Wa-Ala Eji, had employed Chuku Wa-Adoala, a famous native doctor, to 'make Offor' against Chief Wenna's wife Nhua in order that the woman might no longer remain with her lawful husband, but be forced to leave him and follow Wa-Ala Eji.

After performing certain rites over the stick, Chuku sought out the woman and passed it twice round her head, each time calling the name of her lover. Four days afterwards Nhua found that the magic was acting. She did not want to leave her husband, yet felt drawn to follow the importunate suitor, and dreaded that Offor would kill her in case of resistance. Chief Wenna, therefore, came to beg that the guilty parties might be forced to revoke the juju.

According to the head chief of Ogu, Offor is looked upon there also as the child of Ale. In one of the compounds of this town a cult object of unusual type was found in connection with this juju, namely a so-called 'Offor stool,' bound round with a string of cowries. This could not have been intended for use as a seat, since on it, carved from a solid block, was a representation of a shell-less tortoise. No explanation was forthcoming as to the absence of shell. We were only told that under this shape the juju was worshipped by this particular family, together with the bundle of Offor sticks laid near by.

In the house of Chief Okuroji of Obokoffia was seen a number of Offor sticks tied together, each about a foot long and bound with iron round top and bottom. These represent the luck of the family, and are kept by the head of the House. At his death the next in rank takes his predecessor's Offor bundle and hangs it up in the juju shrine by the new one set up on his accession to the chieftainship. Should a chief be angered against a member of his House, he strikes one of the sticks on the ground, calling out the name of the offender and crying : 'May bad fortune follow you !'

Throughout the country-side, in the neighbourhood of Aloa, every means is taken to attract wasps and hornets to the juju shrine. This is done not only as a protection to the image, but because it is thought that they will pursue any man who has broken an oath sworn upon its name.

Iron is juju for Ibo, as among most tribes in this region ; but mangrove wood takes its place among Kalabari. Bells taken from old wrecks were always carried to the juju house.

Juju is two-edged, and may react in a manner unforeseen

by those who invoke it. An instance is reported from the Okoba clan in a case brought before the Omokku Native Court on January 11, 1915. When the love of parent for offspring, so strong among these races, is taken into account, it is unnecessary to add anything further.

Oruk-Wowu stated :

'Accused is my wife. About two years ago she took action against me for divorce and was refused. . . . About five moons ago I went to the place where she was living and took the child I got with her, not knowing that she had gone to a juju and sworn that if I worried her the juju should kill me and had then thrown the juju in the yard. After a month the child grew sick, and I sent for defendant to come and remove the juju. She refused, and on the next day the child died.'

Of all circumstances in which juju is invoked, marriage palavers hold first place. Of such cases the following, also taken from among the Okoba Ibo, is a fair sample :

Omokku Native Court. *Case No.* 5/15.

Charge : Putting juju on prosecutor's sister Uche-Oma about three years ago.

Plea : Guilty for justice (*i.e.* with justification).

Odikanwa stated :

'Long ago my father married this woman for me from her father Elea for £20, and about twenty-four years [ago] she was handed to me. Then my elder brother Odu put a juju on her that, if she leave me and run away to another man, the juju should kill her. This is our custom ; if a woman newly comes to her husband's house, a juju will be put on her that she would not go to another man. About three years ago I got some quarrel with her and she run to prosecutor, her father's brother's son. I told him to return my wife. He refused and then married her to Oni of Omokku. About twelve days ago prosecutor sent for me to come and remove the juju. I agreed and told prosecutor to bring a ram sheep and one bottle gin [in order] to remove the juju. He had not brought the sheep and the gin before the woman died.'

A case [1] which arose among the Ale Nsaw tribe runs as follows :

Wynoji of Aga *v.* Efa Gereku of Aga.

Wynoji (sworn) stated :

' Wula first engaged me, and three years ago accused told him he would marry me and I consented. He took me to his house. I have had three children with him. I made medicine with the last child's hair so that [future ones] would not die. The three all died before I did this. . . . Thirteen days ago I left defendant's house. [Thereupon] he took my hair, chewing stick, etc., and made juju. I heard him invoking the juju that if I went to another husband I might not conceive.'

In a case heard at Isoba Native Court on October 20, 1916, Olu of Orumodogo charged Ome Odo of the same town with invoking various jujus against his wife Wada and stated on oath :

' Three years ago the accused and my wife Wada were lovers, so the accused invoked five jujus upon her that, if she had connection with another man, the jujus must kill her. Of course the woman did not keep the law made by the accused for her. She went and had connection with another person ; by that the juju began to act on her.'

Ome Odo (question to Wada) : ' Of us two, who first invoked juju against each other ? '

Wada : ' It was I.'

Ome Odo : ' Seven years ago the prosecutor's wife Wada and myself were lovers. So the woman Wada invoked juju against me that, if I had another lover in addition, the juju must kill me. I too invoked similar juju against her.'

One of the chief troubles caused by juju to Government officials is that people are often forced to take oath not to bring grievances before court. Such a case came up for trial at Okwuzi on January 7, 1913 : Ajagaro *v.* Omusiana of Obufie.

Plaintiff stated on oath :

[1] Okwuzi Native Court, No. 42/1912.

'Defendant is the oldest lived man at Obufie, and he has got all powers and people at Obufie. About one year now since he rang the bell in the town and swore a juju saying that, in case the people fight or do anything, if they bring the complaint to court, they must die. The defendant did this with the assistance of the other chiefs. Hence, whenever any evil is being done in our country, they never bring the complaint in court. Defendant further swore on juju that none of Obufie people must take out action in court. Last time Obufie people fought and several were wounded, the defendant and other chiefs settled the palaver out of court and took something from them.'

The juju upon which witnesses are sworn at Mbolli Court is a simple piece of burnt clay. This owes its efficacy to the fact that upon such 'brick' all cooking is done. No one dares to swear falsely upon it, lest the hearth spirit should lie in wait and the next food cooked thereon should cause the perjurer's death.

On the whole, the respect paid to jujus, other than those with definitely evil rites, is of great help in the administration of the country. Not only does it provide the chief means of guarding against false evidence in court, but it acts as a deterrent from crime and is more efficacious than our whole anti-criminal machinery.

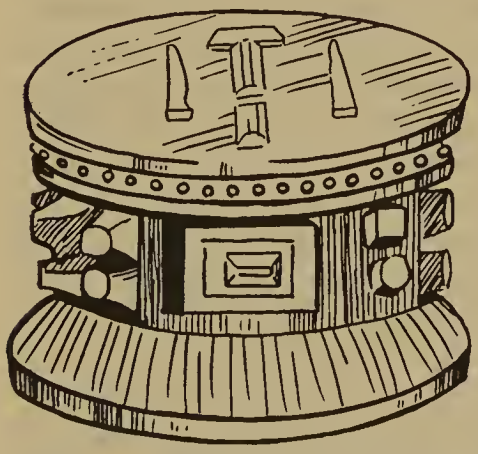


FIG. 7.—Ikenga in House of Chief Okku of Idu. (See p. 98.)

FIG. 8.—Two Small Ikenga used as Blacksmiths' Mascots. (See p. 98.)

CHAPTER VIII

Magic and Witchcraft

In the minds of people such as those of this region, no hard and fast dividing line exists between juju and witchcraft. Indeed, as Chief Amakiri Yellow explained : ' Most juju priests are witch-doctors and therefore to be dreaded. Some, however, are more evil than others, according to the juju which they serve. Witchcraft is very much feared throughout our nation. The most dangerous rites are usually practised by means of medicines bought from Ibo doctors. In olden days, when a man was suspected of harming others by magic, a meeting was held and all who had anything against him brought their complaints before the chiefs. It was the duty of Quaker Bob Manuel's father to pronounce sentence. " You are found guilty," he would say, " and must be driven forth from the town."

' On hearing these words, certain men appointed to the office seized the wizard, while all others fled to their houses. The guilty man was dragged to the mangrove swamp, where he was killed by being beaten to death. Should there not be quite enough proof to settle the matter thus, a deputation was sent to Aro Chuku to consult the oracle. There the accused was either killed or sold as a slave to far-off parts, unless he happened to be very rich and could buy his freedom. Now and again the juju declared a man innocent.'

Seldom indeed has anyone thus sold into slavery reappeared among his or her own people ; but one such case is reported from the Ndonni Ibo. With typical effrontery the woman's former master, Odisi of Ndonni, summoned her at Abaw Court on the charge of ' running away from the head of her House ' ! In the course of his evidence Odisi stated on oath :

'A long time ago, the accused, Ogra Wezia of Ndonni, was given to my father by one Omezulike. My father gave her to Odinikene, a slave of his. She was a witch and they sent her to Long Juju to die. Since then we never asked for her. About a year ago, one Nwa Chuku heard that she was alive. He went to fetch her from Oguta. About eighteen days ago she and her people said they were going to Enwe in Patani Creek. I therefore took action to stop her.'

Among the Ijaw generally, any lame or deformed person, especially if a woman, runs the risk of being suspected of witchcraft. They are thought to have more strength during the night, when they go out either in their actual bodies or send forth their soul in the form of some animal or bird, usually an owl. They meet in covens and dance naked round people's houses, after which they go their separate ways. Some put medicine across the threshold of their enemy, who on coming out next morning will have his arms or legs paralysed. Some of them suck blood from a victim, occasionally literally in the guise of rat or bat, sometimes by suggestion or in the astral form.

It is thought that if you meet a witch at night and call her by name before she recognises you—or if you first take earth in your hand and throw at her—she is powerless to harm you.

Among Kalabari the juju Ogugu is deemed to have the power of killing witches and wizards. Persons suspected of this crime are sometimes forced by their family to go to a place where there is a shrine to this juju and there meet with death if they are guilty. A body of men often kept close watch over a suspect, and if she were caught dancing, putting medicine into someone's food or performing any other suspicious action they buried her alive in the swamp or beat her to death. At Okrika a witch was either stoned or tied to a log and drowned, after which both her eyes were put out so that she might not see the way back to the town. Witchcraft was very prevalent here, and often twenty people were killed for it in a month.

The body of a person whose witchcraft was discovered

after death was usually thrown by Kalabari into the water or swamp between Karakarama and Abonnema, called Ari-Apu Sibbi Kaw, ' witch's head rests.'

When a newly born child died in the Brass region its body was examined and, if the bowels were found ' clean,' it was regarded as being a natural death ; if, on the contrary, they were black, the mother was accounted as probably a witch and both she and her family were carefully watched. Any member of it, who had previously come under suspicion, was then killed ; he was either bound and flung into the water or tied up between two posts and the people came and threw spears at him until he died.

In cases of notorious witchcraft, the Brass and Warri Ijaw fastened the accused to a ' bush table,' lit fires beneath and burnt him, or her, alive.

Speaking on the subject of witchcraft, Chief Obenibo said :

' With our people, witch or wizard may never be buried ; but must be thrown away in the mangrove swamp. After death, there is a certain way of finding out whether the deceased was tainted with witchcraft, even if it has been impossible to prove this during life. For instance, a woman of Ifawkaw was long suspected of being a witch. When she died, her family made preparation for burying her ; but the townsfolk raised objection, because of her evil reputation. Her people, however, said : " We never heard of anything against her, so shall bury her for this time ; but will dig up the body later to see if it has decayed."

' About nineteen months afterwards this was done, on which the corpse was found like that of one new dead. Even the black paint and chalk marks, made for the burying, were as if freshly drawn upon the skin. Therefore all men knew that she was a witch, so threw the body away into the mangrove swamp. This is the way that wizards are tested after death, among Kalabari.'

Mr. A. K. B. Manuel of Degama said :

' Often magicians go out at midnight to the water-side or to waste places, there to dance. They are forced to do this by the witchcraft which is within them. They never sing at such times, as Ibibio are said to do, for fear that

people should hear their voices ; but, like Ibibio, Kalabari wizards do not send out their astral bodies alone for such a purpose ; but go out with their real bodies as well as in spirit. On such occasions they wear the cloth Okuru, woven of palm fibre and cotton—the same as that which is wrapped round a pregnant woman when she goes to visit the shrine of the ancestors. When a man is discovered dancing such a dance, it is a heavy disgrace to the whole of his family and, even in these days, he would probably be driven forth from the compound, were such a thing proved against him.'

The practice of 'dancing witchcraft' seems unusual among most Ibo wizards, but while travelling through Abaw country we were told that it is quite common in that region. According to Shifo, the Government interpreter for this part of the Division :

'There is a special medicine which can be bought from witch-doctors ; this is said to make a man dance with such lightness that his feet hardly seem to touch the ground.' In some parts of the country this medicine is known as Ama.[1]

The grave significance attached to these sinister dances, from a native point of view, is shown by case after case, of which the following, heard in Degama Native Court on December 28, 1908, may be cited as typical. In this, the defendant, Romeo Tom Big Harry of Ilellima, was charged with accusing prosecutrix of witchcraft. In the course of her evidence, the plaintiff, Asotekeari, stated on oath :

'I am a native of Ilellima. Defendant refused to allow me to join in the mourning for his son who recently died, saying that he did not want to fall sick, as his mother had done, through my "medicine." He also said that he did not wish to have anything further to do with me.'

Accused stated :

'It is true that I refused to have anything to do with her and turned her out of my house. The reason was that she had been seen dancing alone at night-time in the bush, which is a most serious thing and denotes a person of

[1] Among Efik and Ekoi, witches and wizards are not thought to dance upon the earth, but in the air a few feet above.

witchcraft proclivities. I can produce witnesses who saw her dance. I admit that I regard her as a witch.'

Erisima stated on oath :

'I am a member of the same House as both prosecutor and defendant. I have myself seen prosecutor dancing alone at night, which denotes witchcraft. It was a dark night by the water-side where I was going to fish. I reported the matter to the head of our House.'

Other witnesses also testified to the truth of the accusation.

A similar charge was brought against Chief Peter John West India, who consequently took out a summons against his accusers. The trial was heard in the Degama District Court on October 30, 1914, and the proceedings are quoted at some length. In the course of the evidence, Sunday John West India stated :

'In our country, when a person practises witchcraft, it is not usual to speak out at once ; but to wait, observe and inquire. At the town meeting, Oginni, a member of Peter's House, stated that he saw this chief in the middle of the night dancing a witchcraft dance, with an Okuru cloth —the special kind which it is forbidden to wear—tied round his loins.'

A man named Asom-Me-Sibido corroborated this, while another called Ebribaw said that he saw the chief carrying an iron pot and that he dipped a broom inside this and sprinkled the 'medicine water' about in the compound. Boribaw, witness for the defence, stated on oath :

'One night I was sleeping in my house. I woke and had to go out for a certain purpose. I saw something pass swiftly, and said to myself: "What is that?" I peeped and saw that it was a man. I kept quiet and looked. The man had a small pot in his left hand and a broom in his right. It was prosecutor. He came from the direction of his house. He dipped the broom into the pot and sprinkled from left to right. I made up my mind it was good to go and call another person to witness. My house is close to David West India's compound. I went to Beki-Wari, David's wife, who lived next door to me. I said : "Come and see what I saw here." She got up and I asked her to

follow me. She came to my house. I kept the door half open and told her to watch. At that time prosecutor had gone to the upper part of the compound. Then he came back. The woman looked and recognised him and said : " This is Obu." (Obu is his native name.) He was still sprinkling. The woman said : " I am going." I said to her : " Look at him proper. Next morning I will report it." She said : " Don't say it out ! " Next morning she came to me and said : " You have killed me." I asked : " What do you mean ? " She said : " You have given me great responsibility for the thing you showed me last night." I said : " What do you mean by that ? " She answered : " My reason for saying this is because I am related to the man. What is the good of calling me to see when he does such a thing ? " I said : " I know you are related to him and that is why I called you. I myself am only a common person in the compound. If I said out this thing I should be told ' Shut up,' and people would stop me from saying it. All right ! I won't say it out." Since then I have told nobody, but Beki-Wari told her husband, David West India.'

Chief Tom West India also stated :

' Witchcraft in our language is termed Ase, a wizard is called Aregbaw and a witch Earom. If a person goes and gets medicines and conceals the fact, suspicion is born in people that he is making medicine for witchcraft purposes. Again, when a man gets many medicines, more than he ought, the medicines turn the person's head and make him go out in the middle night, naked, and walk about or dance, but treading so that people do not see him. Again, if a person is not naked but uses a certain Okuru cloth, which it is forbidden to wear, and people see that he is doing something of the kind, then he is considered to be an Aregbaw. Such a thing can only be done among our people when meant for a bad purpose.'

Peter John West India, the prosecutor, stated on oath :

' About a month and a half ago Sunday John West India accused me of witchcraft. On the first occasion he alleged that I made charms with a nail to prevent women

from childbirth and families from making money ; also that I pinned a native staple,[1] Jumbaw, before one of the Nduen Fobara.[2] I explained that the staple was given me by Kio Bob Manuel, a fetish doctor, to cure me from sickness. It was intended to pin before my ancestor's image. On the second occasion, Sunday John West India said I had planted a certain tree, the Opurit, which walks round at night and on every occasion when it returns to my yard someone must die. I explained that an Etche Ibo fetish doctor, named Warrison, came to my house and made sacrifice and pinned the small sticks that grew up. Even now the sticks are there. I demanded of him who told him that the tree walked round and caused death, also as to whether he had seen it and whom it had killed. On the third occasion, he accused me of the death of my brother Jim and stated that, on the day of his death I killed a goat and sprinkled the blood on my right hand ; also that, after having done this, I gave him part of the meat. I asked why he took it, if he said I had used it in this way ! It was Garita and Oginni who brought the goat from Minima and it was killed sixteen days after my brother's death and was intended for the Sakapu ceremony ; but when the death occurred it was killed and divided among ourselves. He also said that, when my brother Dokkubaw died, I killed a fowl for my hand. I told him I knew nothing about this, and one Belo came and proved that the fowl was killed prior to the death of Dokkubaw. Sunday also alleged that I took an eyelash of a sheep to kill people with, by making it into medicine. I proved to him that a doctor had told me that, as I was always sick, I should take an eyelash of a sheep, together with lizard and other things, and make medicine, so that when I was dying people should know and prevent me by giving me medicines. I sent a boy to get the eyelashes, which he did and brought back with flesh on it. I was angry with him and said that, if

[1] These are iron staples, made by native blacksmiths for the purpose. A deep groove is cut above into which the medicine is pressed, and they are then pinned into the ground before the house which it is sought to protect.

[2] *I.e.* ancestral images.

MR. AND MRS. D. FAITHFUL DAVIS OF BAKANA, KALABARI.

MRS. BOB MANUEL, KALABARI.

facing p. 114.

the owner of the sheep asked, I should have to answer that it was I who did it. I sometimes faint. On one occasion my wife bit me on the thumb to bring me round and I show the mark.

'The second accused is my elder sister. She stated that I once said I would not come and worship her juju and that I should give my brother back to his House. She said that, had she known that I would kill Jim, it would have been better to give him up to his owners as he would have been alive still, also that it was I who killed Ekine. I told Chief Tom West India that she was accusing me of witchcraft and I wanted to swear juju. He said they would not give me juju to swear. Then I sent my boy to Chief Charley King Amakiri to ask him to try and induce Tom West India to give me juju to swear. Since then I have heard nothing from either of them. That is my reason for taking out this action.'

Questioned by first accused: 'Are you a chief or not?'

Ans. 'Yes! I am a chief.'

Q. 'Is it customary for you to go to the Oto place and lie down there with head on clay pot? The particular kind of clay pot (Oku) used only by women after giving birth?'

Ans. 'I know nothing about that; but when Okpara George Will put medicine in my eye, I cannot say where I fell.'

Q. 'What sort of medicine was it in your eye?'

Ans. 'Not for sickness; but so that I could foresee what people were trying to do to me.'

Q. 'Are you not a fetish doctor practising magic?'

Ans. 'No.'

Q. 'Is it customary for a chief to put on Okuru cloth, carry a pot of medicine and dance, sprinkling it over the town at night, alone?'

Ans. 'I know nothing about that!'

Q. 'According to native custom, is it necessary to pour water before your father's image after sprinkling this medicine over the town?'

Ans. 'I know nothing of that.'

Ada John West India stated on oath:

'I am one of prosecutor's wives. Sunday John West India accused my husband of pinning a nail before an image, so that women should not get children nor the House gain money. He also stated that prosecutor killed his brother Ekine and then slew a goat for his own hand. He said that there was a tree that would walk round the town, when prosecutor commanded it, and, when it returned to its place, someone would die. The tree had three branches cut, it is alleged, to represent three men, Dokkubaw, Ekine and another Ekine. First accused said that when Peter cut one branch, one man died and when he cut a second branch, another died—and so on.'

Kio Bob Manuel stated on oath :

'I am a fetish doctor living at Abonnema. About ten years ago I was summoned by the prosecutor to give him medicine. I went and dug out all the bad medicine in his house. After that he told me to make some for him so that others would not be able to affect him or come into his house ; and, my profession being a fetish doctor, I took a native staple and made medicine over it and told him to pin this on the place where he usually sat, so that evil things should not come near. Not long after, I went to Buguma, when he told me not to go to the second accused's house, so I suggested going to my father's people. When I got there, four other fetish doctors were present. Prosecutor's people called us to test the tree and see if any medicines were there. When we went, we found nine different kinds buried around. We tested the tree and it told us to get one ram sheep and one fowl ; then, when we dug it up, to sprinkle their blood on the tree to cool the medicine which was in the tree. Then we were to throw the tree into the river. We did not do this, nor did we dig up the nine medicines, because we were not paid. We thought it was a very bad tree and prosecutor was willing for us to dig it up.'

Peter John West India, continuing, stated on oath :

'The eyelid and eyelashes were cut from a live sheep belonging to Toba West India, without his permission. When he found this out and made a row, I went to him and

explained the circumstances. I was sick for some time with falling sickness. Awo West India's daughter, named Kala Waiin, went with my people to a native doctor to find out the cause of the sickness. The doctor, named Karibi, said that I was to worship my god Tamuno and also the juju Awome-Ka-So. Awo West India is the priestess of this oracle ; she has also another juju called Bibi-Aro. I am not a native doctor.'

Kio Bob Manuel, questioned by Court, stated :

' Prosecutor is not a proper native doctor. He is not a member of the Ebrain society to which all native doctors belong ; but a man may have medicines without being a full native doctor.'

Prosecutor continued :

' A man who is sick may be in possession of medicines to help him and to ward off the effect of other people's medicines. If people consider that a man has had bad medicines, they call him out and examine these before the townsfolk. Then they will request him to swear juju that his medicines are not intended for evil. In my case, I asked to be allowed to swear juju if they thought my medicines bad ; but they refused.

' The medicine for my eye was given me inside the fence round Okpara G. Will's house. Part of the ground was fenced off for the women's Oto-Biri. I came out from the door leading to the fence. I knelt down and then the medicine was put in my eyes. Where I knelt was about five yards off the Oto fence. I never went near the Oku. Omieta and Obi Pokia were present. I did not call together the members of my House nor the chiefs to witness, when the medicine was given to me. They are against me.'

Reuben Standfast Jack, questioned by Court, stated :

' A chief would never have such a medicine given him near the Oku, nor in the absence of the House members and chiefs. He would collect them and tell them that he wanted to make such and such a medicine. A man can never go near the Oku.'

Okpara George Will, called by Court to give testimony, stated on oath :

'About two to three years ago prosecutor wanted to become a member of the native doctors' club. He asked me to put medicine in his eyes, so that he should be able to see any medicines which were made against him. I did as he asked. Then he and I played Ebrain. This took place in his house, where I was living. Several days intervened before we performed the play again. Several people stood looking at us. They were not doctors. Anybody can see us and look at what we were doing; but no one would understand except somebody who had had the medicine put in his eyes. I am a native doctor. By putting the medicine in prosecutor's eyes, I made him a native doctor and a member of the Ebrain. I did not see prosecutor go near the Oku. I put some medicine in his eyes and was going to get another when he stopped me, saying: "Now I am a man indeed! I can see! I want no other medicine!" I did not see him touch the Oku. When playing Ebrain with him, I put on the Okuru dress—the common one with black stripes—not the one only used by women in first pregnancy and then concealed by them. When I saw prosecutor enter the Oto-Biri I was quite surprised. He lay down on the floor. I told him to get up. He came out and we started again on the Ebrain play. I have never seen a Kalabari chief join this club before.'

Chief Reuben Standfast Jack, questioned by Court, stated:

'The only case of a Kalabari chief being a native doctor is that of Davis G. Amakiri, whose father was a doctor and not a chief. His father's juju wished him to become a doctor and, after many attempts to avoid this post and spending much money on doctors, whom he asked to make the juju desist from wanting him, he finally did so.'

Question by Prosecutor to Okpara: 'On my return from opening up Ikri, did you not pull medicine out of my body in the shape of an old manilla with cord tied round it?'

Ans. 'No! It was in your house that I did this, not when you returned from Ikri. After playing Ebrain together, you got out a native cloth called Ekaki Egenni Bitte, and said to me: "If I wish, I can prevent you from going to

my house." You put the cloth across the floor. It was raining. I became like a lunatic and did not know what I did. I ran down to the water-side.

'Prosecutor called out to his people to stop me, saying: "If you do not stop him running, he may lose himself in the bush." He sent out two men named Dokkubaw and Wariboko, who caught me and brought me back to his house, where he gave me medicine. After drinking this, I returned to my senses. [Turning to prosecutor again:] About two months ago I did pull medicine out of your body. You had a pain. I found Agba medicine in your spleen. It was a piece of cloth stretched round some medicine. Also I pulled out a stone. I put these things in the medicine pot in your house.'

Sunday John West India stated further:

'This case concerns the whole House, and I was chosen to be spokesman at the family meeting. The West India House consists of six branches. Prosecutor is the head of one of these. He has acted quite contrary to native custom. When I and the other members heard of the cutting off of the sheep's eyelid, we were shaken and trembled. All the chiefs of the House asked witnesses to come forward and speak. Oginni, Asem-Me-Sibibo and Ebiribaw testified to having seen the midnight dancing, and Ekine also stated that prosecutor asked a native doctor to kill his enemy, Suku Ekine, in the compound. The doctor, an Egenni man, told prosecutor to bring a fowl to try the medicine. This was done, and the doctor held the fowl and pronounced certain words, saying: "This is to try if the medicine will take effect!" The fowl died at once. It happened that a man named Sobari Goma saw these proceedings and informed Suku Ekine, but added: "Do not say anything yet. Wait till the doctor returns, when they will perform against you yourself!" At the meeting, one Aleribi stated that she saw prosecutor one day take powder and fire stick, saying: "My enemy in the compound is to die." He then set fire to the powder.'

Amon-Ibia also testified:

'I saw that prosecutor's goat was hit and killed by

somebody. Therefore prosecutor took the goat, young palm-leaves, one manilla and some old fence sticks. He tied all these together with leaves, then dragged the bundle round the compound and finally threw it into the water. As he did this, people told him : " If an ordinary man or woman in the compound did such a thing there would be great trouble for that one, because such an action always ruins a compound or town." In former days if a man did such a thing, his life would not be spared. Dragging this round the compound meant that prosecutor wished to kill everybody in it.

' A man, whose name I forget, also said at the meeting that prosecutor had done a thing that is very bad among human beings. Even white men know about it. That is about smallpox sickness. One of his children, named Uruwari, had smallpox. He kept the boy in his house. So the disease spread in the compound and several people caught it. Therefore they tried to find out the cause, and found that it was because prosecutor had a son suffering from this disease, whom he kept in his house. In olden times, if a man did such a thing, he would have been charged with witchcraft and killed. Ollo T. W. India, too, said : " One day I heard prosecutor talking to his son Oruwari, saying : ' I have told you—try and work hard and get money ; because in the compound there is nobody now who will fight with you. Where is Dokkubaw ? Where is Ekine ? They have died. Everything is clear for you.' "

' These are the things which prosecutor had done which were stated before the meeting. After the chiefs heard all this they said : " Go back to the compound and take away his medicines." We answered : " We do not wish to do this by ourselves. We want you chiefs of the other branches to send some of your people to go with us." The chiefs gave us their boys. We went with prosecutor, entered his house and got out different medicines—about twenty-eight in all. He said : " Twenty-four of these are bad ones. I will pick them out for you." We brought them before the front of the big house. Then we put them inside a small canoe, paddled out into the middle of the river and threw the medicines into

the water. The four which he said were good ones were left in his house.

'Another meeting was held by the West India House chiefs, who asked our opinion on the matter. We said: "You six chiefs have seen the action of our chief in getting such medicines. We do not want such a chief over us." They said: "Go home and get native doctors to search the compound to find if there are more medicines of which you don't know." We got four doctors who made search, testing the places. They found a tree and looked at it steadily for some time, then told us: "This is a very bad tree. It has killed people." They asked: "There are three branches cut from the tree. What cut them off?" We then said: "If you doctors find anything bad about the tree, we want you to say it out." The doctors answered: "Whenever one of these branches was cut off, one person died. The tree is a very bad tree. It is fully grown and can walk about in the night-time. When it returns to its place, somebody will die." We told the doctors if this tree is so bad it must be dug up. We told prosecutor he must see about the pulling up of the tree and that he must bargain with the doctors about what money he should pay them. He refused, so we went to the chiefs, who said: "All right! We will send and order him to pay and have all the medicines and the tree pulled up." Before their messenger got to prosecutor's place, however, he had left his compound and come to court to take out the summons.

'From underneath the chair, upon which he sat when giving drinks to his forefathers, prosecutor took the Jumbaw and stuck it in front of his forefather's image, then took a stone and put it on top. Whenever he sacrificed to the ancestors, he sat down on a seat, set his foot upon this stone and used these words: "In this house of mine, no one may get money except myself." This is a bad thing. Nobody makes medicines and puts near the forefathers. I told him that he did this to prevent women from bearing children. I said it, because no chief in our country, when sacrificing to his ancestors, ever says that no one must be a wealthy person in the compound except himself. Such a saying will

also prevent the coming of children to the compound. It is true I accused him of killing Jim and others by means of the tree. I said this, because the day Dokkubaw died prosecutor did not attend the funeral nor go to see the body. After it had been carried out for burial, prosecutor rang his igbiri [1] and said : " People are talking in the compound that I am not a good man, and there is a second son, my younger brother. This second son, whose name they are now calling, has died ! "

' One Iboma, a boy belonging to Jim West India, had some money transactions with an Ibo. The affair was brought before prosecutor, who told Iboma : " Shut up ! What are you talking here ? The man, of whom you think much and have a strong mind for, that man is in my hands." About two weeks later Jim died.

' Another time, in presence of Sunday Baby West India, prosecutor said to his son Oruwari : " I have told you, boy, you must work hard to get money. I am always telling you these words. Of those, who formerly troubled you in the House, two have gone. There now remains but one. I have cleared the ground for you." Prosecutor certainly killed a goat two days after the death of Jim. I saw him do it. When a man dies in a compound, no relative will have the glad mind to kill a goat. In this case, when Jim died and prosecutor killed the goat, that showed he was glad at the death of Jim. It is true also that he killed a fowl the day after Dokkubaw died. I also said that he took the eyelashes of a sheep to make into medicine to kill somebody with. In our country a sheep is a very bad thing to take to make medicine. Our people are forbidden to use sheep for this purpose. That is an old tabu for all Kalabari. It is worse if a man does such a thing secretly.'

Awo West India stated :

' My mother, prosecutor's mother and Jim's mother were full sisters. This relationship is the only reason why I am mixed up in the case. My portion in the town was given to me by the Sky. I am the great priestess of the Kalabari ! One day I was leaving Buguma. I left the key of my house,

[1] Rattle made of split seed-pods.

where the juju Bibi-Aro lives, in charge of one Oruba. On my return, I met the House people holding a family meeting. Oruba told me that, during my absence, prosecutor came about six in the evening, saying that he would come to the Bibi-Aro house at night. Bibi-Aro has a little shrine in which she lives. Prosecutor said he wanted to come and perform a ceremony before her there. Oruba told him : " I have no responsibility for the house. I only keep the key so that I can go and sleep there. If you want to perform a ceremony before the juju, you should arrange the matter with Kala Waiin, the priestess daughter. If she permits you to come at that hour, all right ! " Prosecutor did not go and see Kala Waiin. When this was told me at the meeting at Dodaw's house, I said : " It is not fair ! It is not our custom ! If anyone wants to perform a ceremony before a juju, the applicant should go to the priest or priestess with a small bottle of rum and a manilla. Both will then sit down and what the applicant wishes to say to the juju will be said through the priest or priestess. No one can go to any juju to make ceremony in the absence of the priest or priestess. I will go and tell prosecutor he must not come to my house during my absence and say that he wishes to perform the ceremony to the juju Bibi-Aro. If I am at home, he can come to me. That is the custom."

' I also said to prosecutor : " You are quite aware of my custom. You know very well that, if you go there and perform a ceremony in my absence, the juju will trouble me." The prosecutor muttered something like " Are you calling me a wizard ? " I said : " No ! but for a young boy of your age to meddle with medicines, so that your people dug up about twenty-four kinds, on which account a meeting is being held and the chiefs are inquiring how the medicines came to be in your possession ! I advise you to be patient and hear what they have to say ! Even if all the House members were your direct members bought by yourself, they could not allow you to act in this manner and keep all these medicines in your house ! "

' In the branch, of which prosecutor is head, there is no senior member to me, either among men or women. So, if

I found that prosecutor was acting badly, it was my business to talk to him. I did not accuse him of killing Ekine or anybody. The words I have said above are the only words I used to him. I said further to the people : " I have heard of many things done by prosecutor which are ringing in my ears ! " Some time ago I spoke to Jim, when he was alive, and said : " The head of our House said he would send you back to your people. What is the reason of his making this remark ? Have you any row with him ? " Jim answered me : " No ! I have no row with him. Let him do what he likes. If he wishes to send me back to my family, I will be content, and also if I remain here where I am." '

Tom West India stated on oath :

' When a person who acts like this happens to have a palaver with somebody and then says to the person : " I will do you ! " . . . then such a person is thought to be an Aregbaw. Also according to our custom we are people worshipping juju and making images for our ancestors. At the time of performing ceremonies, when a man enters the shrine after befouling himself, unknowing of his men, then, when people see and he hears, he should make a purificatory ceremony. When a man walks into an Oto-Biri ignorantly and then goes to the shrine of a juju or ancestor, when his attention is called to having been to a place where he should not have gone and then to the shrine, the man would make purifying rites before the shrine. When, after doing such things, a man purposely enters a shrine, then according to our custom he is thought to be an Aregbaw. A man who knows the customs and those jujus, the invocation of which is prohibited, and yet invokes them, he is regarded as Aregbaw. There are many jujus which, if invoked, may give trouble, but the invocation can then be revoked. There are, however, some jujus which, if once invoked, can never be revoked. Such a juju will destroy Houses. A man who invokes it is not an ignorant man, but is regarded as Aregbaw. We natives know medicines which doctors can make and by which they can kill people. I mean both by way of medicine and also by invoking a man's name when he is far off.'

CHAPTER IX

Magic and Witchcraft (*continued*)

Many cases similar to that last quoted might be cited from among Ibo, who dread jujus and witchcraft far more than do Kalabari. The following case (No. 766/12, from Omokoroshi Court) may be given as typical :

The prosecutor, Wali, an Etche Ibo, stated on oath :

' I am a farmer at Diobu. One night I saw all six accused make medicine. This they put in a pot and placed outside my father's house. It was dark, about eight o'clock, and they had a lamp. Wanakro, Wanode and Wayo were present. They were staying with me in my father's house. When accused put the medicine there, they said it should kill me and my six brothers. It was Dingbo, or fourth day. We reported the matter to the big men of the town. These called the accused before them, whereon they admitted that they had made the juju. . . . We saw them with the medicine in the bush near the road, about twenty yards from the house. They had a lamp and begged me not to tell anybody.'

Wanode stated on oath :

' Three months ago I came out in the middle of the night . . . and heard Ogolama calling his seven sons. I went back and summoned Wali, Wanokro and Wayo. As we came out they heard our voices and ran away. They said the juju must kill seven of us. The chiefs called a meeting, and said if Ogolama had done this before Government time, he would have been killed.'

A terrible means of invoking sickness and death upon an enemy is practised among Abuan people. According to their belief, it is only necessary to go to the side of a grave—one newly made, for preference—and call upon the dead

man's spirit to rise and send forth the disease, from which he died, to strike down an enemy. An instance of this is recorded during 1913, in which one Anngal was accused of making a juju for illegal purposes. In the course of his evidence, a witness, named Ebum, stated :

'Anngal is my deceased brother's wife. I married her and Akain took her away. Two months ago she went to her former husband's grave and called his name, saying : "Rise up ! I call you ! The sickness, which killed you, must go to Ebum to-day." '

Awafi stated on oath :

'About two and a half months ago at night the moon was shining. I was returning from my friend's house. I saw Anngal on the grave of her late husband Usaw. She was calling to him to rise up. She had some chalk and half a bottle of gin to throw upon the grave. Anngal called on her husband to kill the people in Ebum's house.'

There is a famous Abuan witch-doctor, named Ikuligan of Eghemakuku, who is reported to specialise in medicines by which faithless wives may rid themselves of inconvenient husbands, or jealous women draw down the curse of barrenness upon a rival. His activities are now temporarily interrupted, owing to the following case (No. 469/14) :

Abua Native Court *v.* Ikuligan of Eghemakuku.

W. D. Dapper stated on oath :

'I am Native Court Clerk of Abua. On March 23, while hearing Case No. 405, Olagadion and Queen stated in court that accused, Ikuligan of Eghemakuku, prepared medicine by which Abua women could kill their husbands. He did this for Ibula of Egbema, of which her husband Sokari died. No one can tell what caused his death. The death of Sokari is wonderful. It took place suddenly. I remember that the woman Ibula was on bad terms with her husband for many years.'

Queen stated on oath :

'Some time ago I was in my house when the Otoro people were playing. The woman Ibula came to me . . . and at the same time accused also came inside my house. [After

Ibula had gone] my husband also came. I gave food to the accused and afterwards he called me out to tell me some word. I went. He told me to go and call Ibula for him. I answered : " How can I manage to go this night, as she is now asleep with her man ? " Accused said he would give me medicine, so that when I went I could knock on the door with both hands and the woman would come out without her husband knowing. I refused to go.'

Questioned by the Court. ' Can the medicine . . . kill a person or not ? '

Ans. ' It could kill.'

Q. ' Did Sokari suffer from any sickness before he died ? '

Ans. ' No.'

Q. ' Did Ibula have a quarrel with her husband before this ? '

Ans. ' Yes, she did.'

Chief Ogoiro stated on oath :

' I know that accused is a person who can injure a man's life. One day, when my townspeople went to accused's town for wrestling, one boy knocked another down on the ground. Accused came and jumped over the boy and the boy died. Still now, that thing is vexing us.'

Accused stated :

' Yes . . . I did knock that man and jump over him and he is dead . . . About Sokari I own I promised to give the woman medicine but I never gave it to her.'

Should man or woman fail to attend the burial of a dead relative, unless unavoidably prevented, the omission is generally looked upon as proof that they themselves caused the death by means of witchcraft. For this reason, Ofiriola of Mbara charged Omere Onye-Oku and his wife Nwain Igbo with ' making a juju for illegal purposes and thereby causing the death of one Agu and his daughter.' In the course of the trial (case 648/14) Ofiriola stated on oath :

' About three months ago my late husband, by name Agu, saw a pot of juju in his house and called me to come and see it. When I went there I saw that it was a juju which I had seen with the two accused. Next day the said Agu took

the juju to Chief Obiri, who told him to ask his younger brother Omere Onyeeku about it. Then Agu sent for him to come and see the juju, but he refused to do so. Three days later the juju killed Agu. Then I sent for accused and his wife to come and bury the body, because accused is his younger brother. He refused to come for the burial or to see him lying dead. After that my daughter, by name Sakiri, fell sick and died in the same week. From then accused never put foot in the house. . . . He told one Nwosu to give him back his pot of medicine, [and when this was done] handed it over to his wife Nwayigbo, in the presence of one Isiodu of Elele. He also said that the medicine forbids carcase of person' (must not be kept where there is a corpse).

In another case, heard at Okwuzi Court on January 1, 1914, the guilt of a woman charged with bringing about the death of her husband by 'juju' was established, according to native ideas, by the fact that she could not answer when asked if she had gone to take a last farewell of the corpse. In the course of his evidence Uroh of Etekuru stated on oath :

'About two years ago Diri and Ibea of Afa came to my house and made a juju saying that this must kill my husband, sons and myself. Diri was a fellow-wife with me. She would not agree to our husband marrying me ; hence she made the juju for us. Not long after, my husband died. This month my daughter died.'

Diri stated :

'About a year ago, complainant was married to my husband. Next day she went round the town ringing a bell to give notice that her present husband had killed her former one, and that owing to this she came and married with him in order to kill him too. Both of us were living together. Then I took him to Ogu, according to the directions given by doctors. All the time the said husband was ill and was trying to get well, until complainant came and took him away with her. Owing to that he died.

'Now I have got three sons with my late husband. If I made the juju to kill him, who will then look after the three

AN IBO FARM, SHOWING YAM VINES AND COCO-YAM LEAVES.

ENTRANCE TO A KALABARI VILLAGE, SHOWING CHARMS AGAINST WITCHCRAFT.

facing p. 128.

children? I am living at Afa with my children, as my husband is dead.'

Question by Court. 'When you heard that your husband was dead, did you go there to see his body lying dead?'

To this the woman could give no answer.

Among Ibibio, according to the testimony of Chief Daniel Henshaw and other prominent men, an unfledged chick used as an ingredient of any medicine was a sign that the particular brew was made with evil intent. Amid most, if not all, peoples of this region, the presence of a lizard has a like sinister significance. Case upon case might be quoted in proof; but it is enough to give two, chosen from such widely different tribes as (1) the Okrikans and (2) the people of Ale Nsaw. In the first of these, Case No. 14/4, heard at Okrika Court, a woman named Iwa was accused of trying to cause the death of her husband. Her sister, giving witness for the defence, stated:

'She went to make medicine called Aba. Her lover went with her. The purpose of making this medicine was only to prevent evil. She went to a doctor, who told her to get lizard, eggs, small chicken and a certain kind of black fish called Eboli. The doctor lives at Ebarma. She tried to get these things together; but the people in the compound heard about it and began to talk. The medicine was not meant to harm anyone.'

Question by Court. 'Is it not always for an evil purpose that lizard is used?'

To this no answer could be given.

Iwa stated:

'The doctor gave us the names of the things needed, shrimps, small chickens, eggs, lizard and also red earth. He bade us bring all these things on the morrow, after which he would make the medicine for me. When we got home, I heard a talking that I was getting medicine to kill my husband. I answered: "No! I only get it to protect myself."'

Questioned by Court. 'Was it not natural that people should suspect you, seeing that you went with your lover to obtain the medicine?'

Questioned by husband. 'When you took that man with you, was there no member of my House whom you could have taken?"

Ans. 'I have asked none of them, because the way I was going was neither far nor difficult.'

The mother of accused stated on oath:

"I am the mother of Iwa. We went to consult the doctor about my daughter who was not well. The first time he told her to get thirty manillas and one egg. That was all; but when she went the second time, alone with her lover, I do not know what he told them. The third time I went with them again, and that time the doctor asked for the things he had told them to bring. He said: "Where is the egg? Where the bird's nest?" '

Questioned by Court. 'Did he ask for a lizard?'

Ans. (First) 'That does not concern me.' (Secondly, after further questioning) 'Yes. He did ask for a lizard.'

Questioned by Court. 'Is a lizard ever used for good medicines?'

Ans. (First) 'I do not know.' (Secondly) 'Lizard is never used for good purposes; therefore I had nothing further to do with the matter.'

In the second case, No. 12/12, heard at Okwuzi Court, the discovery of a lizard offered in sacrifice was enough to convince fellow-dwellers in a compound that their lives were endangered. They, in turn, swore juju that the man who had offered up the lizard must die. The result was a charge of 'practising witchcraft to do bodily harm.' In the course of his evidence, the plaintiff, Nwokoronta of Abecheke, stated on oath:

'I went out one day and on my return found all my people unwell. I went to a doctor and was advised to take a lizard and offer sacrifice. One morning I was sitting down when I heard the accused and some other people swearing juju and saying that the person who had offered the sacrifice must die. His wife and children must also die. Three days after this my child Alemalechi, who was in good health before, took ill and died.'

Mazi stated on oath:

'I went out one morning and saw that a sacrifice had been offered in my compound. I made inquiry as to who had done this, but no one made answer. So I called my people and we came out and swore a juju that he who had offered this sacrifice must die. His wives and children must all die. About seven days later the juju was resworn.'

According to the testimony of an Ibo chief:

'With our people a native doctor is called Onye Dibia [person of medicine]. All know witchcraft, but some are good and only make medicine to help men. Others can make both bad and good medicine and yet others only busy themselves with bad ones. At Abaw, they know witchcraft too much, past all other Ibo peoples! Every Onye Dibia has great power, because everyone fears to offend him on account of his medicines.'

According to the head chief of Ndarsi, later corroborated by many others, the small oracular images used by Ndi Dibia are called Agu Nsi (medicine Agu). These consist of a male figure (Woke Agu), a female (Nwaiyin Agu) the dog (Nkita Agu), leopard (Agu-Agu) and other small animals, together with, usually, a diminutive Ikenga. It is to these that the magician appeals in order to answer the questions of those who come to consult him. The use to which Agu Nsi are put at the building of an Mbari house will be found described elsewhere. The word Nsi is mostly used to express black magic and bad medicines, Dibia white magic and good medicines, but no hard and fast rule can be applied.

It is everywhere stated as a general custom that, 'at the time of the new moon, every owner of magic medicine kills a chicken and pours the blood over the medicine in order to "strengthen its power."'

Among all the tribes of this region, as with Ibibio, magicians call a person's name, thereby drawing his soul into the stem of a young tree. When, by their magic arts, they know that the spirit has answered and is imprisoned within, they drive a nail through the trunk, calling out: 'Nkuche Mkpuruk-Obi' ['I nail heart'].

In speaking of the customs of magicians, Obi Amara said:

'When witches and wizards wish to kill man, they often do this by turning bird for night-time. Then they fly, softly, softly, and alight on some house roof. The moment their foot touches, it opens soundlessly. Perhaps the owner is sleeping on his left side. By witchcraft, he is forced to turn over, exposing all his chest. Softly the evil thing flutters down and drives its beak into the man's body below the left breast, sucking blood ; till, after many nights, all his heart is eaten away and he dies.'

Among both Kalabari and Ibo, magical powers are attributed to the Offor,[1] a chief's staff or walking-stick. In the hand of witch or wizard such a staff is thought to exert a sinister influence upon those whom it may touch or even, in some cases, those against whom it may be pointed with evil intent. Should he so wish, a magician can destroy a babe in the womb of its mother by merely touching some part of her body with his walking-stick, in passing. Such a case came before the Native Court at Omokoroshi on July 6, 1910. In this the plaintiff, Wanali, claimed £10 damages against a woman named Oju-Ahia on the following grounds.

Wanali stated on oath :

'About twenty days ago defendant defamed my character by saying that my walking-stick touched her in the market. Hence the child in her womb disappeared ; which is absolutely very bad saying according to our native custom.'

Witness (also named Wanali) stated on oath :

'I was present when defendant said that the plaintiff touched her with his walking-stick ; hence the child in her womb disappeared. I asked defendant : "Where did plaintiff touch you with the walking-stick ?" She answered : "On my foot." '

Oju-Ahia stated on oath :

'Yes, about twenty days ago, the plaintiff touched my foot with his walking-stick in the market. Immediately I got fever and, when I reached home, the child in my womb disappeared. It was due to the walking-stick with which plaintiff touched me. I have never seen his walking-stick do such a thing before.'

Among Ibo, the easiest way for witch-doctor or jealous

[1] See p. 330. This may be only another form of the Offor juju (p. 103).

wife to steal a babe from the womb is said to be through 'making medicine' by means of a cloth worn by the mother-to-be. After stealing this, the ill-wisher ties it into as many knots as its length allows, then bears it into some far-off part of the bush and hangs it upon a branch where no one is likely to discover it. So long as the knots remain untied, the babe cannot come forth from the womb, so its spirit withers away. Only should husband or friend succeed in finding such a cloth and undoing the knots, can the suffering woman be relieved and her piccan see the light of day, but, in this case, dire misfortune will fall upon the cruel witch-wife who had caused the agony of delay. As with Ibibio, much the same result may be achieved by the turning of keys in a lock, calling, at the same time, upon the name of the woman whom it is sought to harm.

Among Aro, another charm in which a padlock plays a part is frequently practised. The account was given us with but slight variations from several sources—the fullest being that of Obi Amara, which ran as follows :

'If you see a fine woman for market-place, and want her but she no go 'gree, there is one good medicine for help man in my country. Take pot, go for some lonely place. Take rope, cut, put inside pot. Get crab, put inside. Get juju fruits, put inside, also padlock. Then hide well and leave for eight days. After that time, go take padlock out ; put it in pocket or under loin cloth. Pick juju leaves and hold for hand. Then go back and find that fine woman. Stand before her and ask name. So soon as she answer, lock the padlock beneath your cloth, fasten juju leaf in hair. Then pass before her, up and down, up and down. Soon the medicine begins to trouble her. Perhaps she may come follow you at once ; perhaps never go come till night-time. If she hardens her heart and will not come then, before sunset next day the man takes the leaf from his hair and, going secretly into the bush, throws it away.

'Soon the woman begins to make noise in her chest, like one who cannot breathe. Then, if she still no 'gree to come and cannot find where the medicine is hid, she will certainly die.'

A curious love charm in the shape of an elaborately

carved ceremonial bow, the ends terminating in male and female figures, was brought up by an Iba woman one evening when we were passing through Ndelle. She complained that, by means of this and the accompanying package of medicine, which was stuck through with porcupine quills, a Kwa man had sought to force her to follow him to his country as a sweetheart. According to her account, he had first shot an arrow in her direction and then forced her to lay her tongue against the bow, after which the magic properties of the latter had compelled her to follow its owner. Hearing of the white man's arrival, however, as they passed through Ndelle, a way of escape seemed to offer. She managed to steal the bow and brought it, with the prayer that it might be confiscated and that, the magic thus broken, she would be enabled to return to her own country. Safe-conduct was provided and she went off happily, leaving the curious charm in our possession. (See Fig. 9, p. 137.)

Abaw Ibo witch-doctors have a special reputation as to the power of their love charms. An instance of this was shown in Case No. 417/15, which came before the Abaw-Ndonni Court in 1915. In this the prosecutor made the following sworn statement :

'I gave the sum of £20 to the accused when my husband took me to his house so that he should make medicine for me that I should bear piccan. I did not know that accused left what my husband told him to do and began to give me medicines which can turn my head and mind not to hear whatever my husband tells me. He also [changed] me so that whenever I see my husband I must hate him and love or look on the accused always. I will bring up those balls of medicine made [for] me by the accused.' (Eleven balls were thereupon produced before Court.)

The commonest way, however, for attracting affection is to mix a love potion—generally called Oggu Awso-Ama [1] —in the food of the person desired. The case (No. 308/15) below quoted came before the Native Council of Omokku, and is cited in preference to others since it also makes

[1] Medicines to bring children are called Oggu Nwa, and those to make very light-footed dancers Ama.

mention of another magical practice, *i.e.*, that of bringing silence upon Court members and preventing them from giving judgment against an offender. In the course of the trial the prosecutor, Wa Awi of Omokku, stated on oath :

' The woman in question is my real daughter. Accused, Okoro Dike of Omokku, have come to me and my daughter asking me that he should like to marry her ; but we object to it. A bottle of gin that he brought that day, we reject to drink it. He go home and administered a medicine, which I now produce, for her. He gave it to one woman named Mneamiri to put in a chop for her, so as she may agree to marry him. This said woman is living with us in the same compound. She always put this medicine into chops for my daughter. When I went to farm, a woman named Ahia Eke gave it to me. I asked her : " Who made the medicine ? " She said : " Accused did. I took the medicine from him."

' I have not received even a penny from accused as dowry. I am the right one to give my daughter to any man whom I like, because her father has died. The man who gave her to this one is only a common man to her and it has not come to my wish at all that my daughter should be married to accused. If she agree to marry him, why should she cry ? Or why they tied her and put into a canoe to take to Oguta ? I want my daughter back from accused.'

Awu Awu, the daughter, stated on oath :

' My mother do not receive a penny on my behalf from accused. He brought with him a bottle of gin to show that he wanted to marry me ; but I refuses. I have never one day agreed to marry accused, and my mother also do not admit that I should marry him. My father had died, and the man who gave me to this very man is only a common man in our family. Nobody make it known to us that accused is my husband. I only heard that day and I was tied mouth, hands and foot and put into a canoe. They seized me to Obuhie, and when I was taken to the said place he sent two persons to sleep me, telling me that they are my husband. Next morning I asked him, saying : " Which of this people is my husband ? " He said : " Utse is."

' Accused and his people are in the habit of making

medicine. He made first one to put into chop for me and this last time I was present when the medicine was made, and he promised to pay the doctor £1 10*s.* for it. The doctor told him that he must perform thus : " At every morning hold a fowl in your hands with this medicine and repeat thus : ' Let the members of Court, clerk and others, become mute in the Court.' " '

Often a jealous lover gives the husband of his mistress a medicine to prevent him from having intercourse with his wife. In Case No. 235/09, at Abua Court, Ayahina made the following sworn statement :

' Accused is my stepson. He had connection with my wife and made medicine to make me impotent. She rubbed the medicine on my body and admitted that accused gave it to her to rub on me.'

Umaraloma stated on oath as follows :

' I am complainant's wife. Accused used to have connection with me and gave me some medicine to rub on my husband's stomach. After I did this, he was unable to have connection with me.'

Thefts by magical means are very frequent in this region. One object for the obtaining of coveted goods came, by accident, into our possession. This is a calabash, somewhat the shape of an elongated pear, encircled by rough basket-work and containing black powder. Armed with this, the thief creeps cautiously up to the house which he wishes to rob. Then, taking some of the powder in his hand, he blows this gently in the direction of the door by which he means to enter. All the inmates will then fall into a deep sleep and the thief can go in and carry off whatever he covets. Against such evil, however, precautions may be taken. On this point Chief Quaker Bob Manuel of Abonnema said :

' Native doctors can make many medicines to protect one against robbers in house or farm. Some of these give skin disease, some even kill. If suddenly attacked, wizards can make a magic snake come out to defend them and drive off their enemies.[1] They are also able to sell such protectors to those rich enough to pay for same.'

[1] Cf. *Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 64.

It was stated by several Kalabari chiefs that thefts by magical means were now becoming so common throughout their country, especially in Abonnema, that the matter was causing great trouble. In June 1915 Chief John George Will brought before me a member of his House named Job, with a request that the latter might be arrested and tried for stealing money by magic arts. A box said to have contained £10 sterling, lately awarded to this chief by court, was produced with the assertion that it had been locked up in a strong chest, in the owner's inner room, to which none but himself had access. Next day, June 22, he went there and found all seemingly safe and untouched ; but investigation proved that the money was gone. Suspicion of stealing this by magic subsequently fell upon Job.

An extraordinary system of robberies took place at Onitsha in 1916. Every white man's place in the town was visited, and the thefts were so barefaced—often taking place while the Europeans were in an adjoining room—that it was commonly thought the thieves in question believed themselves to be possessed of ' invisible ' medicines.

Fig. 9.—An Ibo Magic Bow. (See p. 134.)

CHAPTER X

Magic and Witchcraft (*continued*)

Almost all ills to which flesh is heir are regarded as the result of witchcraft. Lunacy, in particular, is nearly always attributed to a curse inflicted by some malignant magician. In the autumn of 1915 a well-known chief of Abonnema, Ekine George Will by name, showed signs of dangerous hallucination, and finally blockaded himself in the upper part of his 'story house,' threatening to shoot anyone who should attempt to interfere with him. The following statement as to his condition was drawn up by his relatives :

'The cause of Chief Ekine George Will becoming lunatic was that some years ago he went to Lagos for his own private matters. When there, he asked a woman doctor for native medicine to protect himself from being harmed. This was given to him and, after he had the medicine, he paid part of the sum bargained, but a balance of thirty shillings still owing. The woman whom he had the medicine from strongly warned him, saying : "As soon as you return to Abonnema, you must send the amount remaining, failing which you will suffer great trouble by sickness."

'Chief Ekine failed to fulfil the conditions promised by him ; therefore the medicine caused him to become crazy. Consequent to that, we, the members of his house, come ask your kind favour in order withdraw or stopping from sending to arrest him ; as we are arranging to go Lagos in order to pay the balance of money still owing and will ask the woman to revoke the medicine she had made against him, by which he has lost his right senses. We believe if we does such he will surely come to his right mind again.'

Many native doctors are credited with hypnotic powers and 'making a man do what he would never do by himself.'

Perhaps the greatest reputation in this direction is held by the wizards and witches of Fernando Po, which is called by Kalabari Saw Dima ('the enchanted Island').

Chief Amakiri Yellow once said :

'Native doctors can look at you and do you harm. This they mostly do by means of your shadow. Should a dagger be thrown into a man's shadow, he will be harmed. People are also greatly vexed if another sets foot upon a person's shadow. Ibo doctors can make a strong charm to call a man's spirit ; then, when it comes, they seal it up in a juju pot. So that man dies because his soul cannot get back again.

'If an image is made and a man's name called over it by medicine power so that his spirit enters in, then harm done to the image affects that person. For instance, if nail be driven into foot, he gets pain in foot ; if into hand, he suffers for hand, but if into head or heart, he dies one time.'

A case (No. 313/14) in which a native doctor was accused of drawing a man's soul into a pot came before the Okrika Court. The plaintiff stated on oath :

'About three months ago two people named Iru-Anya and Jako engaged accused to make a charm against me. Accused admitted making a charm before Chief Obibo. Coming out of my house, I saw the medicine. It was in my verandah. I called Chief Amade and Wawerri. They sent their boys to see the medicine and advised me to counteract it with palm-oil water. I did so. After one month, accused came by himself asking if I saw any change in my house. He told me that it was he who did the witchcraft. . . . He said he had sworn a juju in Iru-Anya's house by calling up a ghost into a pot. . . . I know that accused made the charm because he himself told me so. It consisted of lizards and a piece of cloth.'

Another way of harming an enemy is to take earth from his footprint and therewith perform magic rites. This method is much practised among Abaw Ibo and Sobo. According to the testimony of several Abaw chiefs, which was afterwards confirmed by interpreter Shifo : 'If a wizard knows plenty medicine, the person, from whose

footprint sand was taken must die within two days.' It is also thought that women can be rendered barren by similar means.

Many charges of this nature may be found in the court books. For instance, an Ndonni woman, named Brosu Akumo, brought the following complaint against a fellow-countryman called Oke-Chukun (Case No. 360/14): 'On my way, returning from Odoni, defendant blowed medicine on me and took my footprint in presence of Ogbolu.'

Similar superstitions are attached to the use of spittle, hair-clippings, nail-parings and old garments, by which it is thought that misfortune may be brought upon the person from whom these were obtained.

Among coastal tribes, some of the most valued magic 'medicines' were those reputed to deprive an enemy's canoe of the power of motion. One occasion, on which such a charm was successfully used by the King of Bonny, has already been recorded. A specimen of the apparatus employed by Kalabari for a like purpose is now in our collection. This was formerly owned by the Bob Manuel House of Abonnema and consists of a flat box with a rectangular hole about 8 inches by 6 inches in its upper surface. There is a small opening at one end through which projects the point of an iron bar, which, when held down brake-wise by the foot of the leader in a pursuing canoe, raised a crescent-shaped 'medicine' fixed to the farther end and pressed this against the lid beneath the aperture. So long as the 'brake' was kept down, the enemy's canoe was, by sympathetic magic, held motionless or at least its movement greatly impeded.

Among Kalabari and some Ibo tribes, magical properties may attach to the elaborately carved stools, generally called Osisi Nduen, formerly made for the use of chiefs and ceremonial purposes, the manufacture of which has now practically died out. Such stools, often ornamented with a carved head supposed to represent an ancestor, were found in the forefathers' shrines among the Kalabari of Young Town, Abonnema and Bakana, the Okrikans of Ogu and the Keni

AN IKWERRI IBO CEREMONIAL XYLOPHONE.

ANCESTRAL STOOLS, KALABARI.

facing p. 140

of Ke. These were among the most sacred of cult objects and formed the earliest Nduen Fobara, or ancestral images. In most places it was forbidden to set them upon the ground.

According to widespread belief, it is dangerous to sit down in the house of an enemy, since the latter may have endued the stool with evil powers. In the course of a trial before the Degama Native Court, Chief Reuben Standfast Jack stated on oath :

'I heard defendant say that plaintiff had one chair which, if a man sat upon it, he would die. He said he heard this from plaintiff's wife, Ombu by name.'

In another case, brought before the same court, Sunday T. B. Harry brought action against one Ogiabala. In the course of his evidence prosecutor stated on oath :

'The accused is my father-in-law. He married a woman from me. One month ago he said to me he cannot marry the woman any more. I therefore took her away, but after two weeks he said he wished to have her back. I refused. Next day I heard that he had told Eoriada that I had taken a chair, made medicine over it and kept it in my house. If any enemy came there, I told the man to sit down on it. If he sat down I gave drink. Immediately he drank he died.'

One evening, at Elele, half buried beneath the crumbling wall of a ruined house, we found a black bowl, some eight inches high, made of rough native pottery. Its use was thus explained by Obi Amara :

'Many Awka magicians and some Aro use such bowls. First, black water is poured in, and over this the diviner leans until pictures begin to form. In this way he can see what is passing afar off, even in other worlds ; for sometimes the faces of devils and sometimes those of dead men look out of the bowl. Also, should a medicine-man wish to injure anyone, he drops a key within, letting it lie for seven days beneath the magic water. On the eighth he takes it out again and holding it in his hand makes movement as of locking up. From that moment the man, whom it is sought to injure, falls sick and must die unless another Onye

Dibia of greater power is brought to save him. Such an one will give medicine to the patient which makes him vomit up the cause of the sickness in the form of a small crab, a cowrie or some such piece of witchcraft.'

As already described among Ibibio and the semi-Bantu Ekoi, Ibo believe that by magical means men can send out one of their souls, the Maw, in animal form. Among the two former peoples this power was thought to be almost exclusively practised by evilly disposed persons with the idea of stealing, or wreaking vengeance on an enemy. With Ibo and Kalabari, however, as with the Ododop tribe on the South Cameroons border, no reproach attaches to the possession of this uncanny faculty.

No case of such an animal affinity is known among Kalabari, who assert that, should an Ibo possessed of this power come and settle among them, he will find himself exercising it with greater and greater difficulty, until at length it disappears under the influence of the great sea-water juju Abazi. It is perhaps worth remarking that the sea has no restraining influence in this direction among Ibibio.

With Ibo, the favourite animal form is that of leopard, a beast, strangely enough, connected not with rapine but fertility in these regions. Chiefs endued with this power, called Ehihi, usually have a shrine, containing several life-sized clay figures, to which they retire when about to send forth their souls in animal guise. That of Chief Wosu of Igrita, of which a photograph was obtained, may be taken as typical. (See plate facing p. 146.)

By most leopard shrines, clumps of the grey-green speckled leaves of the Ebubi Agu ('power of leopard') are to be found, since these form one of the many ingredients in the magic brew which facilitates change of form.

The children of those Ibo who can turn themselves into leopards are washed with juju leaves crushed in water and told that they also have the power. If a man wishes to send out his soul in animal shape and is not possessed of the necessary hereditary medicines, he must buy them from a native doctor. Should anything happen to this 'affinity' when inhabited by such a spirit, the man must suffer or die.

THE METAMORPHOSIS SHRINE OF CHIEF WOSU.

facing p. 142.

Okwuzi Ibo are famous for sending out their souls in buffalo form.

A rather interesting side-branch in the profession of witch-doctor is that known, among Ekoi, as 'the confirmation of hunting dogs,' viz. performing magical rites over the animals to give them sure success in the chase. An instance of this was brought up at Omokoroshi Court by Nlerum of Diobu, who, in the course of his evidence against an absconding medicine-man named Wosu of the same town, stated on oath :

'The defendant arranged with me that he could make medicine for me and would put the medicine on my dog which would then be able to catch many animals when hunting, so that I could make four hundred manillas in a year. He ordered me to buy many things to make the medicine with and I did so. Total money I spent on these is seventy-five manillas, and after making the medicines I should pay sixty manillas. Afterwards he ran away.'

Among both Kalabari and Ibo, evil ghosts, especially those of witch and wizard, are said to come back to earth, seeking to trouble the living. According to the testimony of representative chiefs throughout the whole Division, measures can be taken to guard against such uncanny visitants. As one of them said :

'Ibo doctors can make medicine which will wake you from sleep if an Nsi [witch] draws near to harm you. Also they are able to put magic into the Nka.[1] Then, if witches come at night-time to trouble a compound, they are caught by the power of the medicine and held fast till dawn.'

An instance of this was brought to me in 1915 by two Ibodo chiefs. They stated that some Owerri men had attempted to enter their compound invisibly by magical means, but that the Nka had caught the thieves and held them fast till daybreak, when they were seen and recognised.

A native doctor can also provide medicine which will wake his client, should witch or wizard come at night-time to do him hurt.

Owls' heads are much used by wizards in the concoction of

[1] Iron staple. Kalabari Jumbaw. See note on p. 114.

evil charms and, when these birds are heard to cry round a house after nightfall, Ibo and Kalabari women, like their Ibibio sisters, draw closer round the fire, trembling and saying : ' Some evil thing is near.'

The three greatest deities of this region, namely the Chi at Aro Chuku, Ale the Earth Goddess, and Amade Onhia the Thunder God, are greatly to be dreaded—to use the somewhat grandiloquent language of our cultured native informant—' by all persons of witchcraft proclivities.' The first dooms to lifelong slavery those whom her oracle pronounces guilty of black magic. The second, as we were informed, ' when any bad sickness falls upon a town, orders her priest, who is usually the head chief, to call the people together and find out the cause of the trouble. Then kola nuts are laid upon the place for offerings. Each man kneels down and picks up one with his lips, then " chops " it and goes away. This is done till the turn of the guilty man comes. When a wizard bends down to take Ale's kola, the Earth Spirit catches him and he is forced to confess how he spread the pestilence. Before all the people he must speak out, saying : " I killed this man, I killed that man. That woman also I slew "—until all his crimes are known. When everything has been told, his body swells up and he dies. No man touches him. It is by Ale's power alone that he is slain.'

So greatly is the Thunder God feared by dealers in black magic that here, as with Ibibio, no witch or wizard dares venture forth in time of storms. When man or woman is struck by lightning, it is thought that this doom has befallen them for some bad thing they have done—usually on account of witchcraft. In view of this fact it is, at first sight, somewhat strange that the most important class of wizards is composed of those who control the weather. Yet rain-doctors are thought to be so powerful that they can draw down a deluge upon certain farms, while never a drop falls beyond the boundary fence. It is even asserted that such magicians can make a line across the road, one side of which will be soaked and the other dry. Frank Braid of Bakana, for instance, said that he had often seen the famous wizard,

Chief Omerengwa of Igrita, calling down, or stopping, rain. The latter used to bring magic leaves of different kinds from the bush and hang these from the roof of a small shed beneath which he made a fire. Then, as the smoke rose, he himself, or one of his men, would wave a fan up and down, calling on Igwe to stop the rain, or upon Amade Onhia to send it, and chanting :

'O Sky ! who made men, we pray you make the rain cease [or come].' One song, which he sang to stop the rain, ran as follows :

'Igwe,	giwu	werene	elu :
'Igwe,	you	own	Heaven :
'Biko	mema	miri	oduala.'
'I beg	make	rain	stop.'

'Once in 1913,' he said, 'I myself, and a native clerk named E. R. Granville, laughed and told the chief that, although his tricks imposed on ignorant people, they could not delude educated men like ourselves. In answer, Omerengwa said that he would prove his power by making rain fall upon our farms alone out of all those belonging to the town. This he did soon afterwards.

'Some doctors go outside and pray to Amade Onhia with their eyes raised to the sky. After long gazing, they begin to weep, calling more and more urgently upon the name of the Thunder God. As the tears fall, so the rain comes. Others take water in their mouths and spit it out in the direction from which they are calling up the rain. Others again walk along the road, bearing bunches of fresh plucked juju leaves called Asugwe. They crush these in their hands to press out the juice and fill their mouths with this, then turn round and spit it out behind them. After this, rain falls for back, but not for front. Such magic is much practised in war time, to keep the enemy from attacking ; because no man likes to fight in the rain, as it is hard to keep the powder dry.

'Rain is often made, too, to hold back neighbouring towns from getting their yams planted too much ahead of others. When one town is ready to cut farm, it is some-

times found that another had finished cutting and firing bush and is ready to plant yams before their neighbours have done more than begin to clear land. Then the latter people call upon the rain-makers to send a heavy downpour so as to hold back their neighbours till their own farms are also ready for planting.'

When there is going to be a big play, the people get native doctors to prevent the rain from falling on that day. Some people try to stop tornadoes until their farms have been fired, others pray for them to come because their yams are already planted.

An Aro method of rain-making was thus described by a native doctor : ' Take the charred wood of a tree struck by lightning. Cut up into small pieces, make very dry, then powder and put in long calabash. When wanting to make rain, put into pot, add Asugwe leaves and pour water over all, calling at the same time upon Amade Onhia, praying him to send heavy rain.'

Chief David West India stated that, among Kalabari, when a thunder-stone was seen to fall, it was sought out and carefully treated by rain-makers. Then, in a season of drought, the magician ground it to powder, part of which he threw up toward the sky. This was said to be a very strong charm for the making of rain, indeed quite unfailing. Dick Bob Manuel (Kio) is a noted Kalabari rain-maker ; he is said to have inherited the secret from his forefathers.

During September 1915 the eldest son of Chief Ababua of the Omo Chuku quarter of Ibo, one of the Etche Ibo towns, came to beg permission for his father to take out a summons in order to restrain a native doctor from hostile action with regard to him. The charge against the magician was that he always sent heavy rain whenever the chief called out his people to mend roads or do other Government work.

A man called Ehirimu took action against Orie on February 10, 1911, in Omokoroshi Court, for accusing him of causing rain to fall at an inopportune time. The plaintiff stated on oath :

' Eighteen days ago the defendant came to my house and asked me to come outside. I did so and he accused me of

making the rain fall. I used to draw the rain sometimes, but had not done so on this occasion.'

Among Owerri Ibo the craft of rain-bringers seems particularly strong. Amuneke of Owerri said :

'At the beginning of each farm season Jema-Eze, King of all the Owerris, calls out twenty men from each compound to do four days' work for him before they may begin work for themselves. There are very strong doctors among our people and, if one of these does not want his men to work for the king, he makes rain fall during all four days. The only thing which a chief can do in such a case is to find out which doctor is causing the downpour and pay him to stop it. It is no use to try to use force against such a man ; for should the king trouble, or even threaten, a magician, he would make the rain last for a month or more, until at last the king gave in.

'In 1910 there died at Owerri the greatest of all rain-doctors—an Aro Chuku man named Kamalo. He was so powerful that he could make the rain fall on any house he chose, or between two lines drawn by him, while not a drop fell elsewhere. Sometimes he would let rain come on houses but not on farms. There is a river called Worie near Owerri, on the one side of which are farms, on the other houses. Sometimes Kamalo would tell the rain to fall on the far side, sometimes only on the near one. For two or three days before he made rain ceremonies, he might have no oil mixed with his food. If he wanted to keep people inside their houses, he could make lightning fly about in a clear sky. Then all men feared too much to go out, so stayed within doors.

'If rain falls too much, the yams are spoilt. That is why it is very dangerous to offend a powerful Ochu-Miri (water-doctor). When rain keeps on very strong and steadily out of season, it has been made by some magician. If it came by its own power alone, it would not be so heavy, or would soon stop.'

CHAPTER XI

Prenatal and Birth Ceremonies

The part played by the father in the procreation of the child appears to be understood by Ibo and Kalabari alike, so far as the physical body is concerned. The soul may enter its human tenement from the ghost realm, the tree world or the animal kingdom. The latter belief is, however, more common among Ibo than Kalabari. Most souls awaiting rebirth in animal shape are said to prefer the form of leopard, bush cow and elephant rather than those of other beasts ; but some ' snake souls ' are thought to exist. The trees usually credited with furnishing souls for the new-born are Ojji (Iroko), *Chlorophora excelsa*, Akpo (silk cotton tree), and Okpa-kala (Kalabari Ogbokkaw-Sing), the oil bean, *Pentaclethra macrophylla.*

For Kalabari, by far the chief source of spirit supply is the realm where the ancestors are awaiting a new term of earth-life, and it is believed that the souls which most love their families are more quickly reincarnated than those to whom kith and kin are less dear. Some, however, are never again reincarnated, while the souls of many children are new spirits who have never before lived in human form.

According to Mr. Martin Yellow, among Ibo in the eastern part of the district, a sharp line of division is drawn between the ghosts which await rebirth within the shelter of the family tree—usually some giant specimen of Ojji or Okpa-Kala—and those restless wraiths who go forth at death to inhabit the body of crocodile, serpent, bush-cat or other evil shape. Throughout this part of the country, members of families, whose ancestral shades dwell in the great trees, are looked upon as good, friendly folk ; for, should one succumb to temptation and become evil, his

ghost will in vain seek shelter within the branches but be driven forth by the spirits of his blameless kin to take up his abode in the animal realm.

For such outcasts, return to the path of righteousness is hard indeed. The general rule seems to be : ' once a beast soul, always a beast soul ! ' There is but little chance of redemption in subsequent reincarnations, since the stain of sojourn in animal form will cling about the backslider. The re-entry of one so accursed into the body of a babe born to the family is therefore looked upon as a grave misfortune.

Singularly enough, some spotless souls are, however, thought to enter the animal realm—finding refuge in the bodies of cow, elephant or leopard. No shame attaches to such ; but, on reincarnation, they are forbidden to partake of the flesh of the animal in whose form their spirit sheltered.

In this part of the world young brides linger gladly beneath those trees where the souls of gentle ancestors await rebirth, but hasten with fast-beating heart and wide eyes of terror along bush-paths and through waste spaces, where evil ghosts lie in wait for a chance to reincarnate. Among Owerri Ibo, however, a different belief is held : namely, that only the spirits of those brought to an untimely end find refuge in the branches, while most enter into the form of animals, chiefly antelope.

According to Obi Amara, Aro believe that the Odala tree, the third which Ale brought to earth, is connected, in a special way, with the sending of babes. The following account was given by an Aro woman :

' Among our people, when a wife wants to become a mother she takes a fowl and sacrifices it beneath the Odala tree ; then lies down to sleep. Afterwards, for night-time, she dreams that the tree spirit brings a piccan and lays it upon her breast. At daybreak she wakes and cries : " Where is the babe that lay over my heart ? " Then she rises and taking a long piece of chalk, called by Ibo Nsu, lays it before the tree, praying : " Make my dream come true."

'Even now, chop is always given to this tree by our people in thanksgiving for every child born to a house.'

There is a widespread belief that a husband feels weak during the first two months of his wife's pregnancy. Indeed, every native questioned on the subject showed astonishment that there should be any doubt as to this. One of them added :

'Even if a man is very far off at the time when his wife finds that she is about to bear piccan, he is aware of what is happening because of the weakness which comes over him.'

When a Kalabari woman discovers that she is about to become a mother for the first time, custom decrees that she must be confined to the house for at least eight weeks. During this period of seclusion her hair and eyebrows are shaved off. Cam-wood (*Pterocarpus tinctorius*—Kalabari Awu, Ibo Ihio) and yellow dye (made from the root of a small plant called Ejiji by both Kalabari and Ibo) are mixed, moulded into the shape of a tiny inverted cup and fixed upon the crown of her head, while black designs are painted over her body. After this the hair must be allowed to grow. Ibo dress it in elaborate coiffures, but Kalabari women usually wear it neatly clipped an inch or two from the head. Never again may this be kept shaved in the mode proper to maidens.

It is forbidden to photograph a pregnant woman, since it is thought that, were such a thing done, the soul of the unborn babe would be drawn into the portrait, with the result that the embryo, left soulless, would shrivel away and either the babe be still-born or the mother suffer miscarriage.

About the end of the first month of seclusion, called Sibbi Puma Eria (*i.e.* 'head-cover fatting-house time'), the husband usually brings a gift of cloth, which must be of the kind known as 'real India,' and is stained red either with cam-wood or mangrove bark. Women friends dress the head of the mother-to-be with cam-wood paste—'so that it looks big'—and also rub the red powder over her skin.

The woman is then led round the town, surrounded by friends singing and dancing. Three or four months later

she withdraws for a second period of seclusion, known as Furu Eria (*i.e.* 'womb fatting'). This lasts for twenty-four days, on every eighth of which the body of the mother-to-be is lightly rubbed over with cam-wood and then painted in elaborate, blue-black patterns.

About the seventh month of pregnancy, a fire is lighted by the husband near the place where his wife will lie during child-birth. He also cuts wood and stores close by, so that it should be kept dry. This is done in order that the expectant mother may have no cause for worry as to the making of fire for cooking or heating water. Toward the end of the seventh moon she is led before the Nduen Fobara ('faces of the forefathers,' *i.e.* ancestral images). Every head of a House, however poor, has a shrine erected in his compound, in which may be seen small clay pillars, cone-shaped and usually three in number, surmounted by cup-like depressions for the reception of libations. These represent the ancestors. In the houses of richer chiefs, carved figures set in an arbour-like shrine may be seen in addition. Arrived before these, women friends roast fish and plantains and give them to the officiating priest, who is generally also the head of the House. He lays his hand over the eyes of the pregnant woman, at the same time putting the food into her outstretched hands. With closed eyes, very slowly and carefully she eats, so that no least scrap falls to the ground ; for, were such a thing to happen, it would be looked upon as of evil omen. Even the bones of the fish must be swallowed and, when this has been done, the priest turns to the ancestors and says :

'Mie ie eregbaw. Opu ene lala.
'This is your woman. The great day is reached.

Lokkaw-lokkaw bere ofori adeema iyi kuroma.
Peacefully with palaver none may she quietly deliver bring forth.

Bobe sake lala wa biere wa abara karakara iye eri.'
Coming time reached we hope we from her good thing see.'

On the way to the shrine, custom decrees that the expectant mother should wear a piece of ' real India ' cloth rubbed over with cam-wood. Under her left arm is borne one of the curious box-seats, round or oval in shape, much used throughout the district and called Okpoko by Ibo. This contains a piece of Okuru cloth, woven of cotton and palm fibre. A strange significance attaches to this kind of cloth, which must never touch a man's body and is only used on two other occasions, viz. to wrap round the corpses of those who die of smallpox before these are flung away into the bush, or worn by witch or wizard while executing midnight dances of sinister potency.

While eating, the woman remains seated upon the box ; but when the last crumb has disappeared she rises and stands, with closed eyes, while the cloth is taken out and wrapped round her loins. Rum is next poured before the memorial of the dead chief ; then the cloth is taken off and replaced in the box, which a girl friend carries away to the pregnant woman's room. Only after this has been done may her eyes be opened, otherwise a terrible misfortune would overtake her.

After the Okuru cloth has been removed, a new piece of ' real India ' is taken up by the priest, who opens and folds it three times, saying, as he does so : ' Kobiri ! Kobiri ! Kobiri ! Kobiri ! kpanyi-ma ! ' — *i.e.* ' Fold ! Fold ! Fold ! Fold properly ! ' and ' Finji ! Finji ! Finji ! Finji kpanyi-ma ! '—' Unfold ! Unfold ! Unfold ! Unfold properly ! ' The cloth is then wrapped round the woman and she may now go back to her house, where she is again given a new cloth rubbed with cam-wood and her body is repainted with a black pigment called Eliabo Eria.

Only after conception may a Kalabari woman enter the shrine of the forefathers ; until then, this had been strictly forbidden her. After the ceremony above described, the Okuru cloth may never again touch her body ; should such a thing happen, death is said to ensue.

When an expectant mother has incurred the enmity of anyone to whom her condition is known, she is in grave danger at such a time, since the enemy may invoke against

her the juju Fura Naso—(' womb go away ')—a malignant power, the special function of which is to cause miscarriage. Should a man have slighted a woman of another House or incurred the hatred of a rival, he runs the risk of having the juju Kala Awome Dumomama (' little children living not ') invoked against him. This is said to prove a sure means of bringing barrenness upon the wife of an enemy.

The planks (Tanda) on which a woman lies during childbirth are regarded as unclean. They are kept inside her private room and never brought out where a man's eye might fall upon them. It is also forbidden for any man to sit down upon these. The mother and elder sister of the woman should be present at childbirth, and it is by them that the after-birth is laid in the special pot called Oku or Oko. No man may see this and it must be buried by one or other in a hole secretly dug to receive it inside the Oto fence, which surrounds the place set apart for the private lavatory of each woman of the compound. Every house in which a woman lives has its separate Oto, within which are stored several of the Oku pots, containing water, in preparation for the birth of her babe. It is in this water that a newborn child must be bathed for the first time.

The space within the Oto is regarded as very sacred and possessing a strange power. How serious a matter it is for a man to disregard the tabu may be gathered from the case of which extracts have been given on p. 112 *et seq.* In the course of this John West India stated :

' According to our custom the Oku pots are always kept in the Oto, where men are forbidden to go. Peter John West India entered the Oto, laid himself flat on his back and put his head on the top of the Oku. Such a thing has never before happened in our country. It is forbidden for anybody to do a thing like that.

' Our custom about the Oku is that an old woman, the midwife, is the only person who can go in and touch the Oku to perform a certain ceremony. After a midwife has finished the ceremony, she has to rub palm-oil on her hands before she can go out. If she did not use palm-oil at once and people saw her, she would be taken as a witch. Again,

when a woman has entered the Oto for a purpose, should her cloth happen to touch the Oku, she must take off that cloth and burn it and also perform a ceremony of purification.

'Oku is a thing dwelling in places where only women can go, and even they are not allowed to touch the Oku except on a particular occasion. Yet here the head of our House went into the Oto with the Okuru cloth tied round his loins and laid himself on the ground and put his head on the Oku! When a man does such a thing he ought to undergo purification ceremonies before he goes anywhere.'

One of the chiefs of Abonnema, Reuben Standfast Jack, also stated:

'A man can never go near the Oku. If the cloth of another woman even happens to touch an Oku, she has to burn her cloth and perform ceremonies. In the old days, if we flogged a woman and she ran into the Oto enclosure and a man followed her, he would have to take off his whole dress and ornaments and leave there, and the women of his family would have to carry out sacrifices.'

Only the grandmother, the mother's elder sister or the mother herself may clean up the after-birth (Yiningi). The placenta must be buried close to the Oto in a space called Oto-Kubu (Oto entrance). This must be done secretly and the ground carefully levelled and smoothed above, so that no one may know where it is hidden. Secrecy is of great importance, since, should a witch-woman cherish ill-will against the mother, she could prevent her from bearing another child by obtaining possession of the placenta.

Part of the navel string (Umbo) also is cut off and buried with the after-birth. About five inches is left on the body of the child and usually shrivels off about the eighth day. This must be buried separately and, should the child chance to be born in a strange town, the fragment must be preserved until arrival at home. Some people plant a coconut by the place where it is laid in the ground, and from the growth of this palm the child's age may be approximately calculated in later years.

Both among Kalabari and Ibo the front hair is usually

cut off on the actual birthday before the babe is shown to his father and, in the case of the former people, this is also buried in the Oto yard by grandmother or aunt. The idea is that there is no further need for this tuft which was brought by the new-born from the ghost realm. Ibo often shave the whole head, but among Kalabari a small piece is generally left at the back of the head till the coming of the first teeth. The reason for this custom seems, however, to have been forgotten.

Among Kalabari, too, as soon as may be after birth, the husband brings gifts of money, cloths, yams and rum. The wife's body is rubbed every day with cam-wood. As Mrs. Martha Yellow related :

'Same day piccan comes, the mother may go down to water-side and wash there, three times in all. Afterwards she comes home and bathes in warm water. At five o'clock each day the house women bring water for washing. At eight o'clock and again at twelve they bring chop. Sometimes a rich man's wife chops five times in a day. This is lovely, lovely time ! One grows fat, fat !

'For six days after childbirth no woman may sit on a chair, but they make a seat with planks upon which she rests during this time. She may not touch anything but the things placed within reach. Should a man come to see her, she must cover herself with a big cloth. Only husband or brother may visit a woman at such a time. Special food is brought on a big plate. You take a little yourself and give the rest to the women of the household. No boy or man may eat of such chop.

'When six days are over the women take all the planks to the water-side and wash them. You yourself go down too and bathe. After that you come back and sit on a chair as usual ; also people can eat from the plate after you have touched it. While you sit in your place for those six days you can only eat yam. No man may see the spot where you lie. Only women may go down to the bathing-place. It is forbidden for any man to draw near at such a time. Afterwards you again go into the fatting house for another three to six months. That also is lovely time ! Chop is

brought to you three to five times a day. You wear real India cloth and rest yourself well, growing fat and beautiful.

'When the new mother comes out from her house a great feast is given, like that made in honour of Amakiri Jaja's sister at Buguma. Gifts are brought at this time and the woman goes round to the principal Nduen Fobara shrines of the town to thank the ancestors for helping her in her hour of trouble. First she visits her own ancestors, then those of kinsmen and, last, all others of importance. At this time she wears many fine things. Chains of beads and a head-dress like a crown. There is much singing, dancing and rejoicing.'

After the grandmother and aunt, the father is the first person to hold the new-born. He takes it in his arms and usually names it on this occasion. In addition to the appellation thus given, the child also takes the whole of its father's name and, as he had already adopted those of his forebears for several generations, the result, both for Ibo and Kalabari, is that the child generally inherits a string of imposing names.

Children of both nations are generally named either after the ancestor thought to be reincarnated in the babe or after the deity or juju whose aid was invoked at or before birth—for example, Tamuno or Amakiri among the former nation and Otaminni, Wachi ('the child of Chi') and Wa-Chuku among Ibo. For Ikwerri and Etche Ibo the commonest name of all is Amade, after Amade Onhia the Thunder God. Children often bear the name of the day on which they are born and, among Ibo, of an animal or plant, such as Agu ('leopard'), Mbada ('antelope'), Akukwaw ('a leaf'), Obu-ji ('prospering yams') and Wa-ji ('yam child').

When an Okrikan woman is pregnant, she goes to the ancestors' shrine and makes an offering to the sacred Oko pots, into which the spirits of the forefathers descend. When about to bear piccan she lies down on a plank, with a fire near by—usually at her back. Her mother and relatives stay near to help her. The mother's elder sister buries the after-birth in a hole dug in the woman's apartments.

CELEBRATIONS IN HONOUR OF THE WIFE OF CHIEF MARK JAJA OF BUGUMA, ON COMING OUT FROM THE "FATTING HOUSE" AFTER CHILD-BIRTH.

facing p. 156.

In case the woman only mentions her husband's name when she is put to bed, then all expenses fall on him alone. If she mentions two people's names—husband and lover—then the expenses must be shared between them. When her delivery causes trouble, her parents say to her : ' If you are keeping anything secret, call it out.'

The actual number of children born to a couple is seldom or never given by them. When questioned in court as to the size of their family, the parents always make an evasive answer such as ' plenty sons ' or ' no plenty piccans.' It is thought unlucky to give the real number, as this might create envy in the breasts of ill-wishers.

In olden times no pregnant woman might go to court or to any house where there were palavers. She might never be in any noise or quarrel. When a woman bore twins, this was regarded as a very secret thing. The bodies were laid in an Oku pot and strewn with ashes from the fire kept burning by the side of the mother during travail. The bowl or pot was then covered over by another, and at night-time these were borne forth with all secrecy and thrown away in the mangrove swamp. Should it be necessary to do this by day an old woman went before, calling out that all men must keep within their houses, so that the evil thing might pass by unseen.

Both among Ibo and Kalabari, seventh-month children were always put to death ; but, though their offspring were destroyed, the mothers of such premature comers, as also twin-mothers, were unharmed. For the latter, however, a purificatory ceremony was ordained. The woman went into the bush for eight days, during which dry palm-spadices were burnt in her dwelling and the ashes strewn all over the compound in order to cleanse it. Aro, it is true, drove forth twin-mothers from their towns to a place set apart for them in the bush, but even here they were never killed. A Kalabari twin-mother was obliged to stay in her house for a week on returning after the destruction of her offspring.

According to repeated testimony : ' In olden days most women had twins but hid it up. Now that such a thing is no longer feared, not nearly so many are born to our people.'

Mrs. Martha Yellow, speaking on the subject, said :

'A twin-mother must stay in the corner of her room, upon planks laid on the ground. She cannot be treated like one who has borne a single child. People of the household shave her head and put on a cap made of woven stuff, like a singlet. She may only eat from a broken pot or plate, and if she goes out it must be at night-time, while an old woman walks before her shouting that all married people must stay in their houses and not look upon the one who goes by. After this time she may go out again and also eat from good plates. The bed and everything that she had touched are broken up and burnt.'

When twins are born in an Okrikan household, 'A-A-Yi ! That was an abomination.' The mother was shunned for a long time, but might not be sent away or reproached by her husband ; were this done, the women's society, the Egbele Ereme, would fine him. In Bonny, according to Crow, both twins and mother were at once put to death.

Should a babe be so unfortunate as to enter the world feet foremost, he also must be sacrificed. The body is laid in a bowl strewn with ashes from the 'birth-fire.' Then another pot is broken and the pieces laid over, lid-wise. After this the strange little coffin, bearing the still living babe, is carried forth and set amid the mangrove by the river. Sometimes such unfortunates are said to cry for two days before they die. In olden times either the birth of twins or of a babe brought into the world feet foremost was considered sufficient ground for an Aro husband to divorce the unhappy mother.

A curious case (No. 350/14) illustrating the Kalabari custom of putting to death babes born before their time, as also the supposed incredible vitality of these pitiful atoms of humanity, came before me in December 1914, and runs, in substance, as follows :

Nkema Kolam stated on oath :

'I am police constable No. 440 in the Degama Detachment. On December 3, I was on duty at Bakana when the grandmother of the accused woman, Asoberi, was brought to me. She reported that her granddaughter had killed a

child about three or four days old. I did not believe this and asked Chief Jim Braid, who is the head of their compound. He told me that it was true but he did not know where the body was concealed. I ordered accused to show me the body ; but she told me I must wait till the tide had gone down. When the water was dry, she dug out from the mud the body of a female child, which seemed to be about two or three days old. It was still breathing when we dug it up and shutting and opening its eyes. I told the people to wash the mud off. Soon afterwards they told me that the child was dead. I came and reported the affair to the District Officer and he sent me back to bring accused and witnesses.'

The case was adjourned till the Medical Officer could examine the body, and reopened four days later.

Dr. W. F. MacFarlane stated on oath :

'On December 7 I proceeded to Bakana to inspect the body of a dead infant. I found the corpse to be that of a very small female child in an advanced stage of decomposition. So far as I could judge, taking into consideration the state of putrefaction arrived at, it was an abortion of six to seven months' gestation. It may never have lived. The putrefaction was too advanced to make further examination possible. It must have been dead over four days and not more than eight days.'

Asoberri stated :

'I bore the child alive in the night-time. In the morning we found it dead ; so we went and buried it. The old people of the town buried it. I do not know why they buried it in the mud. The child was conceived about six months before.'

Obuta, mother of accused, stated on oath :

'I am the mother of Asoberri. I saw the child born. It was so young. It was like a kid. It was alive and cried for a few minutes. It did not live very long. It is against our country custom for a child to be born prematurely ; so we tried to hide about it and were going to bury it in the back-yard, but people heard about this, so we took it and buried it in the mud. It is not our custom to bury in the

mud, but I was afraid. People were saying that it was against custom to be born like that and that this would cause the death of the head of the House. I hid the child in the mud because I did not wish people to see it. If the child were born good, the head of the House would hear about it. As this head of House is a heathen, it is the custom of the old women of the compound to hide the birth of a child not born good. By our country custom, if a child be born badly, we do not let the men know. When we found that men knew about it, we grew afraid. The House members said that this event would cause the death of the head of our House.'

Fig. 10.—Oval Box Stool, Ikwerri Ibo—used also among Kalabari.
(See p. 152.)

CHAPTER XII

Prenatal and Birth Ceremonies (*continued*)

Among Ibo it is usual for a father-to-be to go on pilgrimage to the shrine of some celebrated juju in order to pray the spirit to protect mother and babe and make the birth 'come good.'

The words of invocation used for a female deity, such as Ala or Chi, are :

'Biku, nnem, lezielem onye ngam na
'Please, my mother, look after this one here [my wife] and

afime ruo mba omono nwa. Agam enye ngi
belly until she brings forth child. I will give you

ihie mkperi ngi. Omo nwoke mengi okawaba,
things I promise you. [If] child man I give you cock,

omo mkpana nwayin menye ngi nneku.'
[if] child she bear female I will give you hen.'

The only difference made in invoking a male juju, such as Otaminni, is that the latter is naturally addressed as 'Nnam,' 'my father.'

Among Owerri Ibo at about the sixth month of a woman's pregnancy her husband takes a fowl, kola-nuts, palm-wine, alligator peppers and cowries to the oldest man of the town. The latter then leads the mother-to-be before the memorial posts which represent the forefathers, Ndiche. A high mortar, of the kind called Nkpuru or Ekwe, is now brought, and into this the palm-wine and peppers are poured, together with the fowl's blood and some chalk. A young boy beats this into a paste, which is laid before the Ndiche. The patriarch then takes a bowl of pure water, pours some over the post and the rest on the woman's head. After this

he rubs chalk and water between his hands and then smears the mixture over her face and body, saying :

'Ndiche ! Look at your child. Let no evil thing touch her, whether a small evil spirit or a big evil spirit. Let no witchcraft hurt her. If it be a boy child, let him come forth head first. If it be a girl child, let her come forth head first.'

The husband is then bidden to stand before the Ndiche with hands held out, palms upward, towards the priest, who takes water in his own mouth, ejects it over the other and then pours some of the blood of the fowl upon the medicine already laid before the posts. After this he places the mixture in the man's outstretched hands and, holding out his Offor, says :

'Ndiche ! This is your share of dowry I have brought to you on behalf of your daughter. I have paid the share belonging to the living. Allow no evil thing to happen to your daughter. After the birth I will bring you a fowl.'

Then the couple go home, and on each succeeding Eke day —*i.e.* every fourth day—the man rubs medicine over his wife's body, repeating the prayer of the old chief. This must be done for four consecutive Eke days, after which the woman may do it for herself as often as she likes, until the babe is born. The name of this medicine is Efor Nsi Onye Ire-Ime.

When a young wife is about to beai for the first or second time, no matter how far off she may be from the place of her birth, she always tries to reach home in order that her piccan may be born under her parents' roof. When such is the case, the husband goes, as soon as he knows the sex of his offspring, to offer a hen for a girl-babe, or a cock for a boy, before the Ndiche, begging the ancestral shades to look favourably upon their new descendant.

Should it be impossible for the wife to return home for this event, as soon as the infant has been shown to its father, custom ordains that he should take a fowl of the same sex as the child and set out with this for his wife's native town. The relatives will, in all probability, be on the lookout for his coming and, when they see him in the distance, running with the bird in his hand, they know the news he brings

and are very glad. At once messengers are sent round the town to call all friends together to rejoice with them.

When, for any reason, the birth takes place not in the wife's town but in that of the husband, the latter's mother or sisters or, failing these, his brothers' wives, look after the mother-to-be before, and during, childbirth. Only a woman's own sister, however, can render the next service, save in the rare case when she proves sisterless, under which unusual condition her nearest woman relative must act as a substitute. The service was described as follows :

Shortly before the birth is expected, this relative digs a hole called Egugu Ala Nwa (' hole ground child ') near the back-door of the house. Over this crossed sticks are placed and in it the placenta and both pieces of the navel string—*i.e.* that cut off at birth and that which falls of itself about four to six days later—are buried, together with the first drops of milk (Miri Ara) drawn by the gentle hands of sister or mother from the young wife's breast, which is afterwards rubbed with palm-oil.

Should the woman's people live a long way off and be unable for some reason to send any but a small girl to dig the Egugu Ala Nwa, the latter must, no matter how small, start the work. Then, if her hands are too little to do more than throw up the first flakes of soil, the rest may be finished by a woman of the husband's family.

During the three weeks of seclusion ordained by custom after the birth of a babe, the young mother must take her bath over this spot, into which must also be thrown the ashes from her hearth and all other refuse swept from the room before dawn, that their presence at sunrise may not vex the ancestral shades.

The time of seclusion is called Omumu-nwa (' giving birth to child '), usually shortened into Omu-nwa. Some informants stated that it is also called Omu-ngwaw (*i.e.* ' Omu children or young leaves ' ; Ngwaw, the Tombo Palm tree, *Raphia vinifera*), which is the name given at Ibodo to the wife of the Thunder God Amade Onhia, and appears to be another name for the Earth Goddess Ale—the type of fruitful motherhood.

At the end of these three weeks the woman goes with her sister to the hole, bearing in her hand the wooden implement with which it was dug. The sister then guides the young mother's hand twice over the soil in the direction of the cavity, so that some grains fall therein.

For her services in this matter four-pennyworth of cowries are given. No other form of payment may be offered for this purpose.

About three days after birth the husband goes again to the shrine of the juju, whose protection he had invoked on behalf of wife and babe, in order to render thanks. On this occasion friends also bring gifts to the mother, who is rubbed with cam-wood. If the child is sick, it is taken before the juju, whose help is begged, while rum and a few manillas are paid to the priest.

As soon as possible after the new-comer's arrival, the father goes to a native doctor and asks : ' Whom does the child choose out to feed his mother ? ' The juju man consults the oracle and gives, in answer, the name of some relative—male for a boy babe and female for a girl. The one thus chosen will bring food to the mother for four days, after which the parents-in-law look after her for the rest of the three weeks' seclusion. As the child grows up he, or she, is said always to love, above all others, the man or woman chosen for this service. During the whole of their lives, these two stand together in a relationship of peculiar affection. Each calls the other Agu or Agu'm, the meaning of which name is given as ' the one best loved throughout all existences.'

When the child is about two or three years old, the Agu ' dashes ' him a goat, dog, or fowl, according to his worldly substance. This is done in thanks because the child chose him out from among all others as his best beloved. Possibly, as explained in ' The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,' Vol. II, p. 291, this personage is a twin-soul, one of his brothers in the Over-Soul.

According to Mr. N. W. Thomas, among the Onitsha Awka Ibo :

' If a child tells what it saw among the Mwo they expose

it in the Ajoifia (" bad bush ") ; if it speaks before it opens its eyes its fate is sealed.' [1] As the meaning of this passage seemed somewhat obscure, several chiefs were asked for a possible explanation, but without satisfactory results. Most of them demanded indignantly if the white man thought that their piccans were like puppies and that their eyes remained closed until they were old enough to speak. The question, however, produced one piece of information not without interest, *i.e.* that both among Kalabari and Ibo a child in the womb is thought capable of requesting certain things—such as sacrifices—from its future parents through the mouth of a native doctor. The babe is even said to threaten that, if his wishes are not carried out, he will refuse to be born !

When a woman first discovers that she is about to become a mother, she usually goes to a medicine-man and asks what ceremonies should be carried out for her. He will advise that certain offerings should be made and laid before some shrine, such as one of the many Ibudu, or perhaps a termite hill. Mr. N. W. Thomas says : [2]

'When a man's wife is pregnant, a white ants' nest, which is said to be found as soon as pregnancy is discovered, ripe and unripe nuts, a tortoise, chalk, and other objects are put in the bush in the evening and left there till the seventh month.'

Among Ibo of this division the above is not a general custom, but only a suggestion occasionally made by a native doctor, probably with the idea that, since ants are so prolific, such an offering may help to produce fruitfulness in the woman. To the native mind, too, ant-hills are closely connected with the bearing of babes, not only from their supposed phallic resemblance, but as is also shown from the rites practised by little maids in preparation for marriage.

A juju doctor will often advise a woman that the babe about to be born wishes that she should hold a certain object in her hand until after its birth. The thing indicated may be anything chosen by the doctor. It is not forbidden

[1] *Report Ibo-Speaking Peoples*, Part iv, p. 24.
[2] *Idem*, *q.v.*, p. 23.

to lay this down for a short time, but it must always be close at hand, so that it can be caught up at any moment. In all probability the custom is connected, to a certain extent at least, with the Offor Omu-nwa (staff of fertility) carried by Obogwe Ibo mothers after the birth of a babe. This is a small, sceptre-like object which must be held in the hand until the end of the birth ceremonies has been reached. The so-called staff is not more than a foot in length and much like the central spike of an arum in shape, the upper, broad part rubbed with cam-wood and decorated with seven rings of cowries. The functions of this strange object are supposed to be to ward off danger from mother and babe and preserve and increase her fertility. Possibly it is only another manifestation of the phallic cult, and it is perhaps worth mentioning here that, near the chief shrine of the Thunder God Amade Onhia at Ozozo, there flourishes a great aroid, the leaves of which vary from six to twelve feet in height, while its sheath is about a foot and a half in length. This is said to be connected in some mysterious way with the children of the deity.

Among Mbolli, according to Chief Obelle of Abongcha, when a wife is put in the family way she goes to her parents' house to have her teeth cut. At that time she must be well fed on fowls, fish and yam. The ceremony takes place on the last day. In the evening she goes back to her husband's compound and he must buy fish and yams to feed her well until her child is born. When the babe comes, she must not move about but remain quietly for two or three months in one place. Any woman who understands such things helps her in childbirth—whether a member of the husband's family or her own.

It is somewhat singular that, though, as already mentioned, both Kalabari and Ibo appear aware of the causes by which the fœtus is produced, yet, by one of those contradictions to be found on every hand, some Ibo appear singularly ignorant as to other birth conditions. For instance, several complaints of defamation of character brought before me contained the accusation : ' Defendant reproached me that I had borne my piccan *non per vaginam sed*

per anum.' An example of this is given in Case No. 149/13, Okwuzi Court.

Again, it has been repeatedly stated: 'Accused said that I was a wandering woman and that my son was the child not of one man alone, but the joint offspring of many lovers.'

Fig. 11.—The Staff of Fertility.

CHAPTER XIII

Childhood to Marriage

Among both Ibo and Kalabari, saving only that section of the latter living at or near Abalama, where the dominant juju forbids such a thing, a boy is circumcised ' at the time when the spirit of the child agrees '—usually before the end of the first week after birth. Should a babe, however, fall sick after everything has been prepared for the ceremony, the parents say : ' His spirit is not yet ready.' With Owerri Ibo the fourth day is the one generally chosen, unless the child be judged too weak for the operation, in which case it is postponed till a more suitable time. No special rites are carried out on this occasion, but the severed foreskin is always buried in the Oto-Bio, *i.e.* inner yard of the compound.

The practice of circumcision (more accurately, clitoridectomy) was repeatedly stated to be non-existent among Kalabari or Aro women, and the custom, said by Dapper to prevail among the former, of making use of ants for this purpose appears to be quite unknown. With Ibo of this Division, girls are almost always circumcised on the fourth to the seventh day after birth, while Abaw usually wait until nearing pregnancy and Abuan until after the coming of the first menses.

Among Mbolli a boy is usually circumcised on the day the navel-string drops off ; but, if the parents have had no child for some time after marriage and the piccan has arrived after consultation with a native doctor and sacrifices to ancestors, such an one is not circumcised till it gets older, ' because it was hard come by and might easily die.' A girl is circumcised just before going to the bridegroom's house.

An interesting variation of the rite was found among the Egabo Sobo people of Osua Konike, a town just above the junction of the Nun and Forcados branches of the Niger, and also at Iwure-Osifo and Abo-Ataw, two towns which lie somewhat more to the southward. The girls of this tribe undergo circumcision before marriage, usually 'at the time of the coming of small breasts.' Special planks are provided, carved at the head and plain at the foot. Over these, mats of plaited reed are spread for the patient to lie upon, while the operation is performed, as usual, by means of a small triangular blade with handle of twisted iron made by native blacksmiths. The operator must be one chosen from among the oldest women of the town and, in return for her services, she received a bottle of gin from the girl's mother, but all other expenses are borne by the future husband. It is an interesting point that among this people low stools, embellished with a carved tortoise-head, were found in considerable numbers. It was said that on one of these the old woman sits to perform the rite. The planks are afterwards hung up against the outer wall of the house.

According to the statement of Chief Amakiri Yellow :

'Both among Kalabari and Ibo, it is a rule that a woman should nurse her child for at least two years, and only after weaning it may she go to her husband again. At the present time this period is seldom exceeded, but in former days Kalabari women often gave breast for four or five years. I myself can remember that I was already strong and could play about among other children. When my father went trading, he often took me away for a week at a time ; but always on returning I came back to the breast of my mother. I remember well the last night ; for I sucked too much, so she got up and rubbed bitter-leaf over her breasts while I slept. Then, when I woke again and tasted the bitterness, I cried till daybreak. I must have been seven to eight years old at the time.'

On another occasion Mrs. Martha Yellow said :

'All women like to suckle their own children, but some have hard breast and so are forced to give the babe to another

to feed till their own milk flows. Women drink tombo at such times in order to provide plenty juice for the child. Old women can suckle their grandchildren, should this be necessary, long after they themselves have ceased to bear. Native doctors can give medicine to produce milk.'

Should it be found necessary to hand over a babe to a foster-mother, the one chosen must be a relative or, at any rate, a fellow-townswoman.

If a child does not begin to walk at the usual age, a Kalabari mother calls together the small folk from neighbouring compounds and explains the state of affairs. The children then set out to collect sea crabs and sand from the shore. The backward babe is buried up to its waist in the sand, while the crabs are set on to bite him. As a result, the unfortunate mite naturally struggles to get free and is said often to begin to walk for the first time in consequence of this treatment. With Ibo, a special form of rattle, called Taka-taka, is drawn before the babe to induce it to crawl.

When a child falls sick, it is usually carried to a native doctor to learn the cause of the illness. He may answer that some evil spirit has found out its name, and is therefore seeking to injure it. In such a case a new name must at once be given. If successive children die, one after the other, about six months to a year after birth, the mother generally cuts the face of her last-born 'so as to make it look different to those who have gone before' and thus deceive the malignant ghosts who are seeking to bereave her.

Should a babe's first tooth appear in the upper jaw instead of the lower, this is thought to be a very bad sign and, by old law, 'the child must be sent away from that country.'

At the age of seven to eight, when the first tooth falls out, a Kalabari child is taught to take this to the parents, who tell him (or her) to dance round the house, holding the tooth; then, when the starting point is reached once more, to fling it upon the roof thatch. This is said to be done in order to induce Olo Gboi-Gboi (lizard) to send him good teeth.

PRIESTS OF THE JUJU OKUNU AT OBOSIDJI, KWALE IBO.

KWALE IBO WOMEN.

facing p. 170.

Among Owerri Ibo, the child must run four times round the house before flinging the tooth upon the roof. After having done this he should stop eating salt, save for a very little, until the first teeth have all dropped out ; otherwise, it is thought, they would take many months to do so.

With Kalabari, at the coming of the first tooth a babe is painted over with black dye made from the fruit of *Randia maculata*. The yellow paint Ejiji is also used at this time as well as a black pigment made from the seeds of either the Ekram, a creeper, or the Ikelliba or Ememeniba trees. On the first day the blue-black paint called Kuru-Kuru or Buruma is used, and next day the child's body is rubbed over with Awu, *i.e.* cam-wood. Long chains of beads are hung round its neck, and sometimes also corals. Then the mother bears it round to visit friends and relatives, all of whom 'dash' it one or two manillas. The father also brings gifts at this time. Among Etche Ibo the babe is borne first to the house of the chief juju priest, in thanksgiving, after which bands of cowries are tied round its wrists.

Among Owerri Ibo, according to Amuneke of Owerri, at the coming of a child's first tooth, the first person to remark it will be caught by the mother, who takes from him, or her, a cap, cloth, or any little thing which can be easily seized. The property may, in any case, be ransomed back on payment of eight-pennyworth of cowries, but the same person is expected to give a fowl to the child when it starts to walk, or, in default, to hand over two shillings wherewith to buy one ; it is customary for a chief to offer a goat instead of merely a fowl.

Most Ibo file their teeth. With Mbolli, when a boy gets big his teeth are cut. Five manillas are paid to the man who does this. The operation is performed with a small knife and is very painful. 'It is done because of old custom. If it is not done, companions laugh at one and say : "You are a nobody. You do not split your teeth."'

After a boy has reached the age of about fourteen he is forbidden to enter the women's rooms of the compound. This rule holds from then onwards for all women save his

sisters or wives. Even with these he may not enter until he has first taken care to find out that the owner is alone.

In olden days, among Kalabari, little maids wore the short cloth called Kunju Fina (*i.e.* waist tie) for some time before their first menses. Afterwards they put on the Bitte Sara or long cloth. Among this people no ceremony is performed at the time, but with Ibo the girl will be confined to her house, where girl relatives visit her. All the first night they sing and dance, and usually stay for several days, grinding cam-wood with which to paint her body. The parents kill a goat and make a feast, feeding her three times a day during the whole period of seclusion. Her betrothed husband also sends drink, money and goat's meat. The confinement lasts from about two weeks to a month, after which the girl comes out again. This period corresponds to the Ekoi, Efik and Ibibio fatting house.

Among Isokpo Ibo the maidens generally spend about three months in the Mbede (fatting house), but at Akwete in Aba District a period of two years is often passed therein, while at the neighbouring Ohambele Chief Amakiri Yellow saw a girl who was confined to the house for seven years, during which time she never left the compound. As previously stated, the fatting house is undergone by Kalabari just before, and after, giving birth.

Among Okrikans and Egenni, as also with Ibo at Omokoroshi, the Iria ceremony is performed for young girls 'at the coming of breasts.' This takes place every year when that mysterious juju water, the Egenni River, is full—*i.e.* from the tenth to the eleventh month. 'During this time the girls are confined to their houses and given chop three times a day. They are dressed in bright-coloured cloths and hung round with beads and native ornaments of all kinds. At the end of the time the Ogu play begins and lasts till Christmas. For this, all the Iria girls come out, dancing, singing and rejoicing.'

According to some accounts, the Iria girls also take part in the Okrikan new corn festival, which in olden days was one of the chief religious ceremonies of the year. It is considered a grave crime for a man to induce a girl to yield

to his advances before the Iria ceremony has been performed on her behalf. An accusation of this nature was brought by Daniel Kalio, head chief of the Okrikans, against Moses Ogudire. In the course of the trial the prosecutor stated on oath :

'The girl is my sister. She had not performed the native ceremony called Iria, because she had not come up to age. It is law in our country that whoever has not performed that ceremony may not be cohabited with. Defendant had seduced her to do so.'

Later, further details were given us by Mr. John O. D. Kalio, cousin of the head chief and master of Mbolli school :

'Okrikans call the Earth Goddess Amakiri. This deity is the protectress of virginhood. Among our people it is regarded as a very bad thing if a woman's first-born child dies. This is looked upon as a sign that the mother had known man before going through the Iria ceremony. Should a second or third child also die, that is thought to make the matter sure. When such a thing is proved against a girl, she is never allowed to go through the ceremony, and to the end of her days all women bring this up against her. In such a case the parents have to go and make sacrifice to propitiate Amakiri on behalf of their daughter. Every Okrikan town has a shrine and priest of this goddess.

'Circumcision is not practised among Okrikans ; but after the Iria ceremony has been performed the " big cloth " dyed with cam-wood is tied and brass ornaments may be worn. About three weeks later the girl may come out dressed in very fine cloths. A great feast is given at this time, which is paid for by parents, relatives and the intended husband. Black patterns are painted on the girl's skin by a woman who receives many dashes for this service. Very ancient songs are sung on this occasion.

'The evening before the feast is called Kunju Mie Ene [waist-painting day], because at that time all the " private parts " are painted over with red dye. The feast day itself is called Buruma Mie Ene [dye-painting day]. The festival was formerly held at harvest time, but on account

of the spoiling of clothes by rain it is now put off till the dry season.'

Here it is perhaps well to interrupt Mr. Kalio's account, in order to record an interesting detail contributed by Bishop Johnson, who, as head of the Niger Delta Pastorate Mission, has worked for many years among this people. His information was corroborated by the Rev. J. Pratt, of Opobo, also an African, with long experience of local customs. As already recorded, in speaking of the shrine of the dominant juju Fene-Ma-So, mention was made of the many skulls to be found therein before its destruction by Government about 1897. They continued :

'In the house dedicated to the fetish there was one particular skull from which everyone in the town was forced to drink. Upon the appointed day, which fell in the Iria season, then usually held about August, a small canoe filled with tombo was always brought round to a certain spot by the water-side. Thither all the inhabitants flocked and from it the afore-mentioned skull was filled again and again until everyone had partaken. Even the babies were given a few drops.'

This rite was said to be carried out partly in honour of Fene-Ma-So, but also as an important part of the Iria ceremonies.

To continue Mr. Kalio's account :

'After the feast, all people rest for one day, then on the morrow Chiri Mu Ene [procession-holding day] is kept. On this occasion the Iria girls wear the most costly cloths of all, carry looking-glasses and wear coral beads and anklets. A tall drum, of the kind called Ommaw, is played. This is rubbed over with cam-wood and swathed round the base with white cloth. It may not be set on the ground but must be put up on a small platform of sticks. The drum itself is a kind of juju, and to it are offered dashes of money and food. Other drummers come out, playing small instruments called Ikiriko. They begin about one o'clock. All the virgins go singing behind one of their number, chosen to lead them because she is judged to have the sweetest voice. They dance in time to the drum, a

hundred and twenty or more together—wearing their cloths in a roll round the waist. Above this nothing was worn, so as to show the painting upon their bodies, as also that the girls are fat and well-looking. The third day they have another procession in honour of the girl's juju belonging to a certain quarter of the town ; but this occasion is not so important as the first.

'As soon as the third day is over, the girl is free. It is not thought good for her to take a lover at once, but this is now a matter which only concerns herself and her intended husband. To yield to any wooer before the Iria ceremony has been performed is a shame and reproach that can never be quite wiped out.'

Aro girls, too, are confined to the house at this stage of their development. The first time of seclusion is here called Utu ('growth'). Later on, before a bride may go to her husband's house, she must pass through a second period of confinement called Ogala Ngadi ('going to the place of her husband'). Only her mother and future husband may visit her at such a time, and no Aro man who keeps to juju law would marry a wife who had not conformed to this rule. Such is also the case with Egenni.

In his 'Report Ibo-Speaking People,' Part I, p. 60, Mr. N. W. Thomas says of the Onitsha-Awka sub-tribe : 'If a girl conceives before her first menstruation, her child must be thrown in the bush.'

After repeated inquiries, I venture to think that this may be a misunderstanding of the information given. Of the many natives of the different races questioned on the subject during the first seventeen months of our stay in their country, each one affirmed unhesitatingly that such a happening was held to be beyond the bounds of possibility, and that the only explanation they could suggest was that 'before her first menstruation' should read 'before some ceremony carried out at the coming of small breasts,' usually about the time of the first menses. In the course of the eighteenth month official matters made it necessary to visit the country of the Ale Nsaw, where we came across a case in one of the court books which, at first sight, seemed

entirely to support Mr. Thomas's statement. It ran as follows :

Okwuzi Native Court *v.* (I) Didi, (II) Urot, (III) Nwynuzor —all of Mbede town. (Cases Nos. 91–3/12.)

Abogu of Mbede stated on oath :

'Didi is the owner [*i.e.* head chief] of Mbede town. Urot is the mother of Tata, and Nwynuzor is the mother of Urot. In olden days it was customary that, in case a woman gave birth to a child *without seeing her monthly course*, the child must be thrown away ; but, since Government came, this has been stopped. It is about two months ago now that Urot gave birth to a male child, and they sent for Didi to come, but he refused. The child was alive, crying, and Urot and Nwynuzor came and told me that it is a thing forbidden. Urot and Nwynuzor took the child and threw it away that afternoon. I told them not to go ; but they refused [to listen]. The child was crying as they were going.'

Question by Court. 'Is the child dead ?'

Ans. 'Buried alive !'

Q. 'How do you know this ?'

Ans. 'I heard them consulting.'

Q. 'Who was present ?'

Ans. 'Urot and Nwynuzor.'

Amafuonea of Mbede stated on oath :

'About two months ago Nwynuzor came and called me, telling me that her daughter Urot was about to give birth. I told her that I would not come.'

Q. 'Why did you refuse to go ?'

Ans. '*Because Urot took conception without seeing her monthly course, which is a thing forbidden.*'

Obea of Mbede stated on oath :

'I am the husband of Urot. I had married her for a long time now. We had some palaver and she left my place for five months. When she returned she was in the family way. I asked her how this happened ; but she could not give an answer. Urot tried to procure abortion and I rang the bell at Mbede town, asking the people not to allow

her to come to their houses. I was not at home when she gave birth. I was at farm.'

Q. 'When you returned what happened?'

Ans. '[On my way back] I heard Wanuna of Aga saying that she had seen a very strange thing—that Urot had given birth and that they had thrown away the child alive. I went and asked Urot, but she denied, and I made palaver with her and took five shillings to come and take action. . . .'

At first sight nothing seemed clearer than the above; yet everyone questioned on the spot declared that the expression 'took conception without seeing her monthly course, which is a thing forbidden,' meant, not that matters had not proceeded with Urot according to the ordinary course of nature, but only that she had not carried out the rites proper to this stage of her development and was therefore not *officially* regarded as having passed through that stage. Shifo, the Government interpreter for this part—an Ijaw of unusual intelligence and long experience among the tribes of the region—stated that never, in the many years he had spent among these peoples, had it come to his knowledge that man or woman held it possible to bear piccan until after the first menses. His opinion was unanimously upheld by everyone questioned.

This is perhaps as good an example as any of the danger of taking words on their face value—a difficulty which must beset every genuine seeker after truth among people such as these. Usually, beneath native information there lurks a deeper depth, and infinite patience, time and care must be given if, at length, a little truth may be established.

Further information, given by the Rev. J. Pratt, of Opobo, and corroborated by the Rev. Ockiya, of Azumini, contained interesting details concerning a rite practised among Ohambele Ibo at the time when the fatting house girls there emerge from their period of seclusion. This happens at the close of the native year, *i.e.* at new yam time, just before the death dance in honour of the Ikuru drum was given.

'At such times,' they said, 'the Ibo at Ohambele used

to offer a yearly human sacrifice, which was generally a girl.'

Mr. Pratt was himself witness of one such ceremony. The victim was flung into the river, with a multitude of fowls attached by short lengths of tie-tie to her body. There were so many of these that they acted as buoys, and kept her afloat for a long time. To continue the account :

'This was at close of year, just before Ikuru dance. Some Bonny people who chanced to be in the neighbourhood saw the girl thrown into the river and therefore watched and waited. Afterwards the Ohambele men went away ; so the Bonny folk went and rescued the woman while still kept afloat by means of the birds.

'Government was quite new to the land at that time. It was about 1902 or 1903. The woman is now dead, but she lived for years after the attempted sacrifice, and even married and bore children. Her name was Anya Lewechi.

'The play of the Ikuru drum was given at the time when the young girls came out from seclusion, that is to say during the new yam festival at the end of the farm year. Up till the time when Government became strong, many people were sacrificed and eaten on this occasion, young girls also receiving their share of the flesh.'

The last-mentioned statement is in direct contradiction to that given by all other informants throughout the Division, namely, that cannibalism was never practised by Ibo women hereabouts, because human flesh tends to increase fierceness in the consumer, a result to be deprecated as regards all things feminine.

CHAPTER XIV

Childhood to Marriage (*continued*)

When a Kalabari man wishes to approach a girl of his race with a view to marriage, he sends her a personal gift of one coral bead, together with a large square bottle of gin or rum as a 'dash' for the family. Nowadays whisky may be used for this purpose. Should these presents be accepted, it means that the relatives agree to the betrothal. On the arrival of the so-called 'drink offering' a family meeting is held to discuss the matter.

Should the girl chosen be very young—*i.e.* roughly speaking, from one day to ten years of age—the fiancé gives a continual succession of 'dashes' to her parents, to help support her 'until the coming of small breasts.' When that age is reached, money must be provided to buy waist beads for her. Next come further sums to purchase several of the small cloths called Kunju Fina, which she begins to wear at this time. After this she may be led to the house of the future husband and a further gift of money must be made to those who lead her thither. From now on she may visit his house when she chooses, but must always be accompanied by sisters or other feminine relatives and is never permitted to eat 'chop' there until the full marriage rites are ended.

Later, a food offering must be sent by the fiancé to be laid before the Nduen Fobara of the betrothed's family. This sacrifice to the ancestors must be repeated on every Fene Bene (eighth day) during the next nine weeks. Twenty yams and two bottles of rum or gin must be given on each occasion, a hundred and sixty yams and sixteen bottles in all, together with palm-oil and about twenty manillas. Then, until the Bibi Fe ('mouth-buying') ceremony has been held, the girl receives ten to twenty yams a week

from her betrothed, with two bottles of palm-oil, one head of plantains and a sum of money with which to buy fish. When the marriage has been completed and she goes to live in her husband's house, five yams a week, five to ten manillas, a bottle of palm-oil and a head of plantains are thought enough. As already mentioned, after leaving her own home for that of her husband, no woman may clip her hair in the shaved patterns ordained by custom to indicate a maiden state. Among most Ibo, notably those of Owerri, no maiden may shave her head entirely from the moment of receiving her first proposal ; a small tuft must always be left from the coming of the first suitor.

Among Ikwerri Ibo a strange rite still obtains with young girls preparing for marriage. These, every year, make phallic cones or pillars of sun-baked clay, sometimes plain, sometimes ornamented and painted, called Eku. Occasionally the top is shaped like a head and surmounted with an attempt to represent the elaborate coiffure affected by girls of this age. A full account of the various types of Eku and of the ceremonies performed in connection with them will be found in ' Some Nigerian Fertility Cults.'

Should the girl be a maiden, a large part of the dowry is usually paid when the affair is first arranged ; but it may be completed within two or three days of the actual marriage. If the girl is no longer a maid, all dowry is generally paid after the ceremony. In olden times, among Owerri, if a girl ran away from her betrothed, the latter could claim back double dowry. It is the giving of the feast and the drinking of mimbo at the time of settling dowry that makes the difference between lawful marriage and the purchase of a slave wife. Often a small girl lives with her husband's family until nearly grown up, but returns to her mother for at least a month before the latter goes to give notice to her future son-in-law that his betrothed is now ready.

Before the new yam festival the maidens of a town dance for two days, and then the bigger girls, ' who have known men,' give a play which lasts for about six days. They used to dress very finely for this occasion, but the custom appears to be dying out now.

Among Isokpo Ibo also, if the father takes mimbo from a suitor it shows that he is willing to accept the latter as son-in-law. After the drinking of mimbo the girl follows her betrothed to his home for eight days ; then she returns to her father, bearing back a gift of palm-wine. The father provides plenty of fish and other food for the husband and, while feasting, a day is appointed for settling the amount of the dowry. On this occasion the father goes to his son-in-law's home, accompanied by four or five ' big brothers ' or old people of his House. The most important relatives on the other side are also present. Mimbo is brought, and all drink ; but the future husband is sent away before the question of dowry is raised, and only summoned when the amount, usually about £24, has been settled upon. Should the husband fail to keep the agreement, the father can take action against him. The dowry is usually paid in instalments—the little maid living with her future husband until nearly ready for marriage, when she returns to her parents' home and notice is given by her mother, as among Owerri. Should the man have connection with the girl before this, the mother is vexed but does not usually make much ' palaver.'

It seems to be a general rule among tribes of this region that frailty before marriage, when discovered, forfeits further dowry being paid on a bride's behalf. The following case (No. 286/09 of Nkarahia Court) is typical of many :

Woke Abara stated on oath, in substance, as follows :

' About five months ago the defendant paid nine hundred manillas on my daughter's behalf, but refused to pay me the remainder. The woman was mistress to one Amadi Wanodi, and when defendant heard this he came and took her from me, saying that he would not pay the balance of dowry.'

Defendant stated :

' I was marrying the plaintiff's daughter and had paid him eleven hundred manillas before the woman was given me. On the day he handed her to me, he never said anything regarding money. I cannot pay any further dowry, because she was in a state of pregnancy before I received her. It is our country custom that, in such a case,

no further dowry should be paid by the husband, and that the party who committed the adultery should pay the balance.'

In some cases the rule is pushed even further and all sums already expended by the bridegroom may be claimed back. An example of this (Case No. 308) was heard on August 7, 1909.

Abaraka stated on oath, in substance, as follows :

'About four years ago I was marrying the defendant's daughter, and had paid six hundred manillas on her behalf when I heard that she was pregnant. I therefore demanded her from her father, as, according to our country custom, she should be given to me free and the six hundred manillas I had already paid should be returned to me. Defendant refused to hand me the woman, therefore I summoned him. We have held a family meeting, but in vain.'

The native assessors supported this claim, and judgment was given accordingly.

In such cases the offender is generally made to pay to the girl's people the dowry thus lost from the husband or betrothed. In an action (No. 436/10) taken before Omokoroshi Court, the plaintiff Chindaya stated on oath :

'About three years ago defendant " conceived " my sister Amade whom I had given to her husband. Owing to the conceived given to my sister by defendant caused the husband of my sister took her for nothing. No dowry was paid according to country custom, hence I am claiming the dowry payable from the defendant.'

Among Kalabari there is a special word, Opossima, used for any breach of chastity on the part of a betrothed girl. This fault entails a heavy penalty on the offender, for an erring bride goes to her husband as a slave wife and cannot claim the protection of her family against ill-treatment. In the words of Mrs. Martha Amakiri Yellow :

'Should a girl go to another man before she bears piccan to her proper husband, the husband takes her entirely, before this she still belonged partly to her parents' House ; But afterwards, even if the husband knocks out her teeth, her relatives have no right to interfere, since a man can take

such a woman entirely for himself and treat her in any way he chooses.'

This rule also holds among Ibo, and is kept with special rigour in the Omokoroshi region. On many sides it was, however, stated that unchastity in a betrothed is more frequent at the present day than in olden times when parents exercised greater control. The rule that a young Kalabari girl might only visit her future husband's house on certain days, and then only in company with sisters or other relatives, is also said to be less strictly enforced than formerly.

Among Mbolli, according to Chief Igwe of Ogali :

'About the end of December a lover takes some presents to a girl's house. A month later he takes more and they let the girl come to his house with friends. He makes feast. She is painted with cam-wood. After that she goes back in the evening to her people. About May she is again painted over with cam-wood and led before the juju Aa. This is the real marriage ceremony, after which she goes back to her husband. If a girl goes to a man before this, there is a big palaver. If she is put in the family way, a meeting is called, and the lover must pay four hundred manillas as damages to the husband, and the child is regarded as belonging to the latter.

'The dowry for a first daughter, Ada, is 1,340 manillas for the father and 200 for the mother ; for a second daughter, Olo, 1,200 for the father and 200 for the mother. Other daughters get the same as Olo ; only Ada gets more. In all cases a goat is given to make a feast.'

Aro, Etche and some Ikwerri Ibo cicatrise their women when ready to go to their husbands. Among Aro this is called Mbidi. It is performed at the second Mbede (seclusion), and is looked upon as indispensable to a proper marriage. A lawfully married Aro girl therefore never goes to her husband untattooed.

The operation is performed by a friend, who holds a small piece of the skin between finger and thumb and cuts it with the point of a sharp knife. Round Afara, however, incised patterns of this type are only made upon the body of a woman after the birth of a babe.

The tattooing expenses are borne by the husband and are

usually paid for before marriage ; but payment is sometimes deferred and occasionally, though rarely, refused outright.

Kalabari do not cicatrise their women, but paint them in elaborate patterns at the time of tying the ' first cloth ' and subsequent festive occasions.

Just before yam harvest, Amafa Ibo bridegrooms go to the houses of their future parents-in-law, bearing the gift of a fathom of cloth. Afterwards the betrothed girls all go singing down to the place of the juju Miri Ewule. There each digs up a small load of clay, which she works till soft and smooth, then bears it back to her bridegroom. This is afterwards formed into a ball, slightly flattened and indented like those said to have served as the earliest representations of Chi, or the smaller ones laid by Western Ikwerri Ibo girls amid their Eki, as described on pp. 63 and 180 respectively.

Formerly, marriages were arranged between suitor and parents or the head of the bride's House without much regard for the girl's wishes. Now, among both Kalabari and Ibo, although infant betrothal has by no means died out, the right of independent choice is beginning to be insisted upon. The following letters are typical of many showing the present-day attitude :

ABONNEMA,
Dec. 17, 1914.

SIR,

I beg your worship to consider as to whether it is necessary for head of my House to get an attempt to stop me from falling in love with a man of the same quarter, who came to me with his individual self to offer me a marriage and that I agree entirely well, provided he is one who, as far as I know, can be able to do every expense on my behalf in the most comprehensive way, pending on social love he had for me. I shall be very thankful if your worship confirms petition as per granting to my identical opinion with regard to the marriage in question.

Thanking you very much in anticipation,
I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Yours most obediently,
ELAH DON PEDRO.

WESTERN IJAW, SHOWING CICATRISATION.

facing p. 184.

ADANTA TOWN,
OMOKOROSHI,
22/4/15.

SIR,

I beg to submit to your worship's kind consideration: that one Okpoko who is my brother, forced me to be married to one Wogu of Omu-Ene town. This I strongly reject, on the ground that I have no love with Wogu who betroth me while I am a baby. More also, he is a very, very, old man. We cannot be happy, neither enjoy ourselves.

But Okpoko could not let me rest—drawing me all about the streets—forcing me that I should go to Wogu's house, for that he has received the amount of sixteen pounds on my behalf.

I humbly pray that your worship will please rule against this way of marriage, or else we will be driven to death.

Leaving the whole for your kind assistance, I have the honour to be,

Sir,
Your obedient servant,
AMADI.

OKRIKA,
15*th Jan.* 1916.

LADY TALBOT,

I respectfully beg to forward the attached through you to the gentleman Mr. Talbot to plead on my behalf regarding my trouble. I humbly beg to state that as you being a woman, and very well know that a woman cannot possibly marry to a man whom she has no love for, so long as marriage is not a temporary union, but life long. I have long since been suffering under a husband whom I have no love whatever.

I shall be very much thankful if you will give me all necessary assistance to fall in marriage with Mr. Johnson Kalio who is my own choice, and one that I have all earthly love for.

I beg to remain,
Ever your humbly maid,
HENRIETTA KALIO.

The next document gives some idea of the difficulties of courtship from the suitor's point of view.

BUGUMA,
3/3/15.

SIR,

As the District Officer of this District, ready to hear at any moment the crying of his servant, I respectfully yield forth this complaint.

On a certain day in our trading market I was sitting, when a certain girl named Ijirikueniba passed by and, being attracted by her feature, I called her mother's attention to know if she could like me to marry her daughter if she had no husband, and she replied me that she had no husband, I should marry her and I left her that day.

And at another day, she came to me saying if I really meant to marry her daughter? And I said: 'Upon your consent?' —And she went her way.

And finally she came to me whilst I was sleeping and told a certain lady who was in the hall of the house that, when I was awake, she must tell me that if I really want to marry her daughter she is consented, because herself is wanting to be fed for husbandlessness, and if I marry her daughter it will be a help to her, only she should like to hear from me directly. This message Mani, for this is the lady's name, told me when I awoke.

And at another time she came and sent a certain man, by name Moses Lawson, to call me and I went; but he wanted to go after he had called me for her and I stopped him to remain to hear whatever she might get to say, and he was willing, and there in his presence she said: 'Once I told Mani something to tell you; but you never give me any answer, and now I have come again. If you wish really to marry her, give me a native token that you will marry her.' Then I enquired as to whether the girl had any husband; but she replied 'None,' and according to native custom and laws I gave her two manillas, for two jars of palm-wine, for token.

After this, Mr. Daniel West India then appeared as the girl's husband, to charge me with seduction, simply because

both the girl and her mother are his father's [property]. And after very keen investigation into the particulars of the case, the court could arrive at no ground where he could be supported to gain the verdict [therefore] dismissed the case.

. . . Your worship can see if this has any form or shape in similarity to seduction, . . . and even this very girl has been married by a certain gentleman before me. . . .

My thousand words cannot do better than your worship's wiser consideration.

I remain, sir,

Your worship's humble servant,

GILLIAS PRINCE BATUBO

his × mark.

In olden days, if a mother-in-law had trouble with her own family, she could take refuge with her son-in-law, who would build a house for her in his compound and always regard her as of his family. This was the case among both Kalabari and Ibo, but there are exceptions at the present day, as the following appeal shows :

NDELLE MARKET,
27th Feb. 1915.

SIR,

I thy humble maid-servant have the honour to state to you all my thought in this paper, before thy presence. . . .

For this our bush country Ndelle, when a man went to woman for marry her daughter, he will work any kind of work for the mother, and do many expenses, with tombo and gin, for the relations. If Idika said that he received the dowry fee of my daughter, what would he done to me? Not him training me up? Not him can do every things to me! Again, if received any dowry from Asile, why then he coincidence with Asile and put me out without my knowledge? Not him succeed [to] my late father's house. I conceived by the late Chief Wori of Ndelle. Him conceived by the maid-servant of the late mother of Wori. . . . Again Asile never do me any good as mother-in-law or work any

work for me, or pay expenses at all for me. . . . I think over and over this two person they theft me. How then the girl herself never told me? I shall charge them for trouble.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
I am yours obedient servant,
Miss Womese her × mark.

Fig. 12.—Clay Figure in an Ibo Mbari House, showing a Style of Coiffure in which Piassava is plaited in the Hair to lengthen it. (See p. 214.)

CHAPTER XV

Marriage

Among Etche Ibo it is forbidden to take a 'lawful' wife from another tribe, though it is permitted to have women of other nationality as slave wives. Also, like Isokpo and Owerri Ibo, it is forbidden to marry in the same quarter. Northern Ikwerri, for instance, the people of Elele, as also Aro, may marry even in the same compound, provided the parties have neither the same father nor mother.

The reason given for the prohibition, among most Ibo, of marriage within the 'quarter' is that usually the inhabitants acknowledge a common ancestor. 'So, if the descendants should marry one another, it would be like the union of brother and sister.'

With all Ibo, so far as it was possible to learn, the difference between 'lawfully married' and slave wives consists in whether a special sum was spent by the groom in providing drink, either gin, rum or palm-wine, for the bride's family. Among most Ibo payment for this item of the wedding expenses was made in manillas, which were called Maia (drink), but at Owerri cowries are used for this purpose. In any case the amount must be handed over before witnesses, while tombo is drunk; 'otherwise whatever sum is paid cannot be regarded as proper dowry, but only purchase money, so that the bride becomes a slave wife.'

Among most Ibo 'lawful' marriage is termed Ololo, while the less honourable bond is known as Onyi, or Uga by Central Ibo and Aro.

With Kalabari there are two distinct forms of marriage, Iya and Igwa-sime. Women married by Iya rites become lifelong members of the husband's family, even if later divorced or widowed, and all children borne by them to

other men are considered as belonging to the House of the husband *de jure*.

Under Igwa-Sime marriage children always belong to the mother. The father's House has no claim upon them, though they can live there if they wish. Should a chief wed his daughter to a member of his House, he gives her the dower money as her share of the family property. If she marries out of the House, she only receives a part of the bride price.

At the present day Kalabari chiefs are trying to reduce the wedding expenses to the following :

For Iya marriage, when the contracting parties belong to different Houses—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Drink money (for bride's family) – –	2	0	0
Cloth, for the girl herself – – –	10	0	0
Money, half to bride and half to her family	30	0	0
Yams (ten weeks' supply) – – –	3	0	0
	£45	0	0

When bride and groom both belong to the same House, only half fees are exacted.

For Igwa-Sime marriage the dowry is £10 for a maiden and £5 for one no longer of that estate.

The full Iya ceremonies are long and complicated. According to many chiefs, the rites are as follows :

'At a big marriage, sometimes as many as three hundred bottles of spirit are given, one to each guest. Many pieces of silk, velvet and name-cloths, often forty to fifty in number, are brought as gifts to the girl, while some must also be dashed to her sisters and other members of the family. It is now that a bride-to-be first ties round her the cloth called Egenni Bitte (Egenni River cloth).

'By old law, till the full dowry has been paid, no girl is fit to touch any cooking pot belonging to her future husband, nor may she eat even the least thing beneath his roof.

'After the dowry has been paid, a watch-night is held. The husband calls together all the bride's family for this ceremony, which is named by our people Bibi-Fe ["mouth

buying "]. He invites his friends also and a play is given by both sides. First, three hundred manillas are laid out before the shrine of the woman's ancestors. The bridegroom must count these, one by one, by the light of a half-turned-down lamp. As he counts the manillas quick, quick, quick, his friends call out the tally; but the bride's family snatch at them secretly, so that often as many as six hundred must be laid down, because the rest are hidden before he can get them counted out proper.

'Next morning a feast is spread in the bridegroom's house, but the bride may not eat yet, only wait at table. At night-time a dinner is given at which the bridegroom sits at the head of the board with the bride by his side. First, he dips food in the dish and puts to her mouth, then she does likewise for him. Before the meal starts, further dashes must be given. These form the final payment for buying her mouth.

'At the same time other gifts must be brought for the relatives who attend her, otherwise they also would not eat. Without this ceremony even secondary wives may not take chop in a man's house, but for them no watch-night is held and fewer guests are invited, none outside the two families. After interchange of food and payment for her mouth, a woman may cook for her husband and eat beneath his roof. The bridegroom must also provide a further set of dashes to pay the bride for her bed.'

The Iya ceremony is regarded as a great honour. In the words of Mr. A. K. B. Manuel:

'Lawful [*i.e.* Iya] marriage is the highest honour conferable on a woman in this country. Only free-born women can be married in such a manner, except in the case of a daughter whose slave father has been chosen as chief of a House and therefore ranks as a free man.'

Among Ibo no watch-night ceremony is held; but the rule is common to both peoples that a wife may not wear anything valuable until after the birth of her first piccan, while a childless Ibo woman is forbidden to dress her head in the elaborate manner allowed only to mothers.

A case illustrating certain points of interest concerning

Kalabari marriage customs was heard in the Native Court at Degama on September 3, 1914. In this, Jim Lawson claimed from Dick Tom Big Harry £90 as damages for the seduction of his wife. In the course of the trial, plaintiff stated on oath :

'Defendant took my wife away a long time ago. I paid dowry for her. Beads for the girl—£5 worth. Food for her every eight days, according to native custom, together with twenty manillas and two bottles [of spirit] for the girl's god [Chi]. Also I gave presents to the woman who was always painting black designs on her. I was to pay two puncheons worth [of oil] to the parents, but I have not yet paid it. I paid £1 worth of rum—the first thing to be given to the parents.'

Chief Charles Douglas, speaking on behalf of the assessors, stated :

'According to our custom the £1 paid for the parents' drink constitutes the marriage, also the £5 worth of beads. These are the first and principal things that constitute marriage. The next thing to be done is to provide food every eight days. For people in the same family the dowry is two puncheons. If husband and wife were of quite different families, four puncheons would have to be paid and also, in this case, £2, not £1, would be given for the parents' drink. Also £2 more—or only £1 if of the same family—would have to be paid before you can take the girl to your house and she can eat in your house.'

The Amafa custom of marriage seems to differ somewhat from that which obtains among other Ikwerri Ibo. For with this clan the principal gifts made to a betrothed infant must be offered first at the time of farm-cutting and again at harvest.

In Case No. 477/14, heard before the Degama Native Court, Chief Sokari George Amakiri gave evidence as follows :

'Eyinda gave—this is the rule—for harvest fifty yams, seventy yams for cutting farms, for fishing eight manillas, for cam-wood two manillas, for yellow wood two manillas. He gave all these every year for fourteen years ; the value of this was over £11 a year.

MR. AND MRS. A. K. BOB MANUEL, KALABARI.

facing p. 192.

'At the end of the fourteen years he had to perform a ceremony when the girl began to get flower. This costs five hundred to eight hundred manillas (£5 to £8). Every year at the girls' festival called Minni Ewule, the betrothed men must pay one fathom of real India, two bottles of gin, two manillas' worth of cassava paint, two manillas for cam-wood and two manillas for yellow wood. He must also pay four hundred manillas to the parents—total £24.'

Certain unnatural rites, practised as tests of manhood preparatory to marriage, by some tribes, will be found recorded in 'Some Nigerian Fertility Cults,' p. 24 *et seq.*

A simple method of marriage, fairly common among Ibo, is that known as 'marriage by exchange.' For this two chiefs agree together that each shall take to wife the daughter of the other. The following case, heard in Elele Native Court on September 25, 1911, may be cited as typical of such an arrangement:

The plaintiff Olu stated on oath:

'According to our custom we used to exchange women and marry. The one in dispute was thus married.'

The defendant Wenwene stated on oath:

'I gave my daughter to plaintiff to marry by changing her with his daughter. Plaintiff consented and married my daughter; then, after all, refused to hand his daughter to me.'

Okrikan marriage customs, as is to be expected from their relationship, nearly resemble those of the Kalabari. The chief difference consists in the lesser amount paid as dowry. With this people also two methods of wedding are in vogue, viz., Yaa, or so-called 'lawful marriage,' corresponding to the Kalabari Iya, and Egwa, equivalent to Igwa-Sime. Should an Okrikan youth wish to wed a maid of his people according to the Yaa rites, he must hand over the following articles:

2 'guinea' cloths,
7 Okuru cloths,
1 piece of real India,
3 pots of tombo,
6 bottles of gin,
22 manillas.

If this offering is accepted by the parents, nothing further remains to be done. The Yaa is thereby completed.

In this list, as with the Iya gifts, there are two 'first and principal things that constitute the marriage.' For Okrikans, according to Chief Sampson Adoki, these consist of the seven Okuru cloths and the twenty-two manillas. 'Should these be accepted by the parents, the Yaa is completed. If £100 paid, but Okuru and manillas not paid, that marriage can never be lawful. The chief expense of Okrikan marriage consist in the sums paid at the Iria ceremony. When once the Yaa has been contracted, no divorce is possible for either party. All money earned and all children borne by the wife belong to the husband. The only thing possible for a woman who no longer wishes to live with her lawful husband is to take a lover. This she sometimes does, but cannot become free until widowhood.'

For Egwa marriage,

70 manillas,
1 case of gin,
1 piece of real India, and
£5 worth of dashes

are asked for by the parents-in-law. 'These things are not, however, obligatory. In the case of a poor man lesser sums suffice. If married by Egwa rites, a woman can divorce herself whenever she likes. All children remain hers and, should she leave her husband, he can only claim return of the actual dowry paid for her.'

For Yaa marriage, according to John Kalio, 'the important thing is—after the Iria and the paying of dowry—that the bridegroom has no rights over the bride until he has given over the Okuru cloth. This must be laid among all the other dowry. So soon as the guardian or mother takes up the Okuru, this is the consummation of the marriage. So soon as she becomes pregnant, the wife takes this piece and mother or husband brings another six to eight Okuru. These are sewn together and wrapped round the waist for protection. The night after the first cloth is given, the mother, or guardian—generally old women—escort the bride to the bridegroom's house, enter into his bedroom and

see how he has spread his bed. No matter how finely he has arranged it, they must do something to it—respread the sheets, etc. Then they drink and feast. After this they lay the right hand of the bride in that of the bridegroom. If this is not done, the marriage is not looked upon as properly ratified.'

The Kalabari Igwa-Sime and Okrikan Egwa were the only forms of marriage here met with under which the children belong to the mother. Otherwise, throughout the Division, the question as to whether full dowry was, or was not, paid seems to be the determining factor in deciding to whom all the children borne by the wife belong. The rule was lately laid down with great force and clearness by certain Okoba chiefs at Omokku. There, on May 10, 1915, Chiefs Ajie, Abara, Osi Agor, Wabali Akor, Ukie Isioder and Oneke Oxu stated as follows before the Native Court in Case No. 532/15 :

' Any woman or womans, having left her husband [even] for twenty or forty years, without divorcement from him, [though she] get a hundred children from a lover we call [these] unlawful children and all is for the real husband, who had expended his [dowry] on her behalf. This is the customs of our country since the world began ! '

Among Ijaw of Abaw, too, rules as to the ownership of children are clearly laid down. Shifo stated :

' In our country, if you marry a woman by palm-wine alone, any children she may bear will belong to her family. Should you pay half dowry, for instance twenty cases of gin, male children will belong to you but girls go back to the mother's house. When full dowry is paid (*i.e.* about £40) all children belong to the husband's family.'

A further method of marriage, practised both among Ibo and Kalabari, corresponds to one in vogue in Biblical times. It was thus explained by Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow :

' A rich woman, who has the misfortune to be barren, sometimes marries a wife for herself. She can give this woman to her husband or to any man within the house who is a connection of her own. For instance, she can thus provide a wife for one of her members, but never for anyone outside the family. Ibo and Kalabari women used

sometimes to buy slaves and give their husbands when they themselves could no longer hope to bear offspring. This is recognised as lawful marriage, and is done on account of house property ; since, if the husband of a barren woman dies, she has no claim upon his property, but if she has " married " a woman, as above described, her share will go to her " wife's " child.'

An arrangement, formerly fairly common among Ibo but unknown with Kalabari, was to give a woman slave to the bride's family in lieu of the payment of dowry.

'In olden days,' it is said, 'the men of Bonny and Kalabari part preferred slave wives to the free-born, because lawfully wedded spouses usually had strong families to support them if they made trouble. Also they had the right of taking away their children if their claim of divorce were granted, while slave wives had no rights at all and therefore gave less trouble. A chief, however, always wished to have at least one or more lawful spouses, so that he might leave behind him sons and daughters of pure race.

'Among Kalabari, in olden days, the lawful wives were never asked to do any farm work, or indeed any task save that of looking after the compound and cooking chop. Even a slave wife did not need to catch fish for her master but only for herself. The boys of the household alone were obliged to work for the chief.

'Among Ibo, on the contrary, the wives do a great part of the farm work, and that is why Ibo would rather have wives than slaves.'

Kalabari women are said to be better treated than any others of the district. 'In olden days they were looked after and cared for more than now, because at present the women do not behave so well as formerly. The men used to make the entire house, while the wives only sat and looked on ; yet, when finished, it was the woman's property.'

Among Ibo also, the position of head-wife is one of considerable power and dignity, though less so, it would appear, at the present day than in former years. According to old custom, for instance, when a chief went out walking, visiting or on a journey, his head-wife walked in front of the whole party. This was said to be due to her because she

had supreme control over domestic matters, and was therefore more important than any other dweller within the compound walls.

With regard to marital relations, it is significant that, should any quarrel arise, through which a wife leaves her husband in anger, native custom lays down that it is his duty to follow and ask her to return. A case of this kind came before the Elele Native Court on September 9, 1911. In this the plaintiff Imama stated on oath :

' Defendant is my husband. A year ago I ran away from him on account of a palaver we had. I had a child with me then. He did not come and beg me to return to him again, but went and took back the woman whom he had exchanged for me with my parents.'

Obi Araite stated on oath :

' Plaintiff is my daughter. I gave her to defendant to marry. A year ago she ran away from him on account of a palaver he had with her. *He did not come and beg her to return as we do in our country.* . . . He has taken back the woman whom he exchanged for her and has given this person to another man in marriage.'

A case heard in Degama Native Court on February 1, 1912, throws further light on the married state. In this the husband stated on oath : ' Plaintiff is my wife. She is disobedient to me. I sent her to take kernels from an Abua man. She did not go. She attacked me on that day and flogged me. She used to abuse me always.'

It cannot be denied, however, that there was another side to the picture. Slave wives under native law, though generally well treated, held a very different position from those for whom dowries had been paid. In every Ibo chief's household, until the coming of white rule, there was always one, called by her lord by the endearing name of Aho'm (' my skin '). This slave was sacrificed and buried with her husband unless she had either borne a babe—in which case the name was transferred to another of the inferior wives—or had amassed sufficient wealth to ransom herself by purchasing a victim to offer in her stead. Such a sacrifice was carried out at the funeral of Chief Mpi of Nkarahia about twenty years ago, described on p. 249.

CHAPTER XVI

Marriage and Wifehood

It is the duty of the head wife of a Kalabari chief to shave her husband, as also to clip his hair. Only wives are allowed to enter the room while this service is being performed, and great care must be taken in shutting the door on entrance, lest the wind might catch stray hairs and blow them about, either into the hands of an enemy or down to the water-side, whence they might be borne along by the current—in either case entailing misfortune on the man concerned. Among Ibo a chief can call upon whomsoever he pleases to perform this service, either wife, child or 'boy' whom he can trust; but the greatest of care must be taken that no single hair falls into the hands of an enemy. Should such a misfortune befall, dire indeed would be the consequences. An ill-wisher has but to secure a few hairs, or even one if his hate be strong enough, and bear this down to the nearest water —no difficult matter in this land of rivers and creeks. There he calls upon the Owu, 'telling all that is in his heart of hate, withholding nothing and casting the hair upon the current.' The Spirit of the Water hears and bears the pledge afar off, but from that day misfortune dogs the man from whose head it was shorn. Usually death follows unless the destined victim learns of his danger and takes steps to call powerful jujus to his aid.

In effect, this Ibo and Kalabari rite of hair cast upon the water corresponds to that of the Ibibio Mbiam, save that, for the last-mentioned juju, it was only necessary to call upon the Water Spirit by name and cast fresh-plucked leaves upon the current. Then ebb and flow, wave or ripple, soft breeze or storm wind, will waft it on and on till, at length, it is washed upon the grass-grown shore before the shrine.

The juju wakes to the message, and thenceforth lies in wait till the canoe of the man against whom its aid was invoked can be lured into deep water. Then the spirit overturns the rude craft and draws down his victim into the mud and ooze, never again to rise to the surface till life is extinct.

Should a chief suspect any of his women of infidelity, he gathers them together and makes them swear juju that they are faithful to him. If anyone in the compound falls sick or should one of the wives prove barren and attribute the misfortune to magic rites practised against her by one of her fellow-wives, the native doctor is consulted by the head of the House, with the result that the people of the compound are usually ordered to come before the juju and clear themselves from the accusation by taking oath upon its name.

On one occasion a charge was brought against some of the principal Kalabari that the honour of their wives had become a matter of little account, which they were quite content to barter for heavy damages. It was even affirmed that nowadays a chief was not above conniving with his wife to secure large sums as the price of her frailty. Such a statement could, unfortunately, be made with truth concerning some peoples, but it raised a perfect storm of indignation here. The principal chiefs came to me in a body to ask advice as to the steps to be taken in order to vindicate their honour in the matter.

Now, from many sides and at different times, we had gleaned details as to the punishment for marital infidelity in olden days, which may be summarised as follows :

Adultery was looked upon as the third heaviest crime in our country. The first was murder, the second a grave theft, for both of which the guilty man was put to death. After these two sins came adultery, though some held that it ranked next to murder, even before theft of cannon or canoe. So grave a crime was this that most chiefs would drown their own women if proved guilty. The least penalty inflicted was for the sinner to be beaten with canes and driven forth out of the house, to live, as best she might, with anyone who would take her in. ' But no respect more given to such a woman all her life long, and no help, if any ill-treated her.

If one chief was guilty with another chief's wife, it often caused war in the town.' So crushingly heavy was the fine imposed upon the family of the adulterer that, at times, these found no method of paying it but by becoming slaves of the wronged chief's House.

In the case of lesser men, the matter was brought before the Sekapu Club and a fine inflicted. ' Every high tide, the adulterer must pay so much to the club ; every low tide so much again, till at last you go beg your friend to arrange with the club for a fixed sum. If their demands could not be met, Sekapu seized the sinner and sold him as a slave. All the town would support the wronged man in adultery case, so that the adulterer had to pay heavy fine, or sell himself.'

The above was independently confirmed by all the head Kalabari chiefs, who, in refutation of the charge of connivance, brought forward the proved fact that every wife convicted of frailty is, even in the present day, driven forth from her husband's house to become a person of no account —that most terrible doom of the West African, to whom popularity and the esteem of his, or her, fellow-townsfolk mean so much.

In olden days among Okwuzi Ibo, who are generally known by the name of Ale Nsaw (' the sacred land or the forbidden things of Ale '), in the words of one of their principal chiefs, Osu of Obiakpo :

' All women in our country were sacred to Ale. . . . In olden days it was a very terrible sin for any man to commit adultery. Should one fall into this crime, he was not only heavily fined but at once made outcast. Never again was he permitted to join any company. Never again might he drink and eat with others. . . . No man might touch a woman's leg or foot.'

Among Kalabari, even in the present day, none may step over a woman's legs. With most Ibo, however, this tabu is only enforced in the case of a pregnant woman, because it is thought that such an action may have ill effect upon the unborn child.

Like Ibibio, most Ibo believe that unfaithfulness in a wife brings sickness and misfortune to the husband. Especially

does such a crime injure chiefs who possess powerful medicines, since all these are affected by a wife's frailty.[1] In olden days, therefore, heavy fines were inflicted upon the lover, while the woman herself was flogged. 'If your own member became a wife's lover, you could kill him if you chose, since he was yours to treat as you wished; but this could not be done to one of another man's House.'

So great a shame was it held throughout this region for the wives of a chief to prove unfaithful, that slaves often refused to support a lord so disgraced. That this idea has not yet died out is proved by a case which came before the New Calabar Native Court on March 18, 1914. In this the accused woman, Dibieriari Amakiri, stated on oath:

'A long time ago the members of John Amakiri did not support their chief; so he asked why. They said his wives used to wander about so. Therefore he took rum and poured out on the ground to the gods and said: "Prove the woman who has wandered about and done misdeeds and punish her."

'During this time I was enceinte, but through the rum the gods found me out and punished me for misconducting myself. I was made enceinte by another man. Just lately, when Gilla J. Amakiri was beating drum about a different matter, defendant came and repeated this story about me, how I was made enceinte by somebody else in John Amakiri's time. I went and asked defendant. She said: "Yes. I knew about it and confessed what I knew."'

Ibiba J. Amakiri stated on oath:

'I am one of the wives to late John Amakiri. His slaves one day said they would not supply him with food any more, because his wives were misconducting themselves. When the chief heard this, he was greatly displeased and said that he would swear all of us. Then he brought out a bottle of gin, poured it into a glass and invoked juju that, whoever commits adultery and conceals it, let the juju kill her. Then he gave to each one of us to drink. . . . After this, I went to one Kwara to ask him to prophesy for me on a different trouble. Later on, the doctor sent plaintiff a message that she should deliver to Chief John Amakiri; but that the

[1] See *Woman's Mysteries of a Primitive People*, p. 131.

infantry child, descending from Heaven, said that unless the chief revoked the juju it could not [be] let out from its mother. So both would die. I was present when the woman delivered the message. Chief Amakiri was very grieved when he received it. We begged him to revoke the juju. Then he sent her away to Minama where she bore the child. She had been cured [from the effects of the juju] before she gave birth.'

At Obokohia (Ikwerri Ibo), should a member of a club or 'age class' be proved guilty of adultery with the wife of another member, the fine was paid to the club. A remnant of this custom still survives among Ibibio, while with the Atamm Ekoi even at the present day a wife is regarded as the property of her husband's age class, and any man who refuses to allow a member of his 'company' to have access to her is punished.

'Among Ibo, in olden days, best friends often swore juju together, after which they could exchange wives without damage. In such relationship there was no shame.'

In speaking of the various cults, secret societies and clubs in vogue among his countrymen, Obi, the Awka-Aro already quoted, said :

'In our part there is one very strong juju called Akpotap. He tells all country when a man is new married and his wife sleeps for house. Then the husband's company comes and knocks and says to him : "Want your wife." Husband says : "All right," and gives tombo. Then they go inside. . . . The juju orders this, because it makes a woman bear plenty piccans. There is no shame in such a thing, either for the woman or for her husband ; for such is the law of that juju.'

Although it is, unfortunately, a matter beyond dispute that women are less chaste in the present day than in former times when penalties were more severe, yet, though some appear shameless, many of those of this region are by no means without shame when discovered in infidelity. Some, indeed, prefer death to life after their frailty has been found out. In one case (No. 866) brought before the Native Court at Degama, Thompson Don Pedro claimed £50 damages

A BRASS IJAW WOMAN SHOWING CICATRISATION.

facing p. 202.

from Ogoru Tom George under the following circumstances. Plaintiff stated on oath :

'Defendant seduced my wife Kalie about five weeks ago. I was out in Degama market and received a message that the woman was dead. I was told when I got home that defendant had had connection with her and her relatives were vexed. On that account she had committed suicide by hanging herself. Defendant came to her at 9 p.m. the night before her death and took her to his house. When she returned at 11 p.m., her relatives asked her about it. Nkari, Bull, Beribu, Amakiri and others were present. She said she would not tell them anything if they were going to ask her about Ogoru. She never admitted her sin, but she was ashamed.'

The objection to marrying the daughters of a loose woman was shown in a case (No. 777) which came before Degama Native Court, when the prosecutor stated on oath :

'In my house defendant abused me and accused me of having connection with all the men of Abonnema and said if my children were all girls there would be no one to marry them, as I was a known harlot.'

Many women pass contentedly enough from man to man —gaily choosing another lover whenever they grow weary of the husband to whom they had been given or if a more wealthy or attractive suitor chances to offer. Owing to the value of women members of the family as potential mothers, traders and farm-workers, it is less often that men repudiate their wives save for some grave offence ; yet cases of faithless husbands and faithful wives are by no means unknown. A callous message was brought to me on one occasion, with the request that it might be transmitted to the sender's brother : 'Thanks for wife sent. I hate her and shall return her soon.'

The following pathetic 'complaint' was brought to me at Elele :

July 19, 1914.

SIR,

I beg very humbly to bring before your worship's notice the following matter. I am a wife to one Wanea Wechu

of this place, lawfully married ; and had a sickness [which is gonorrhea] attracted from him. This sickness lasted over fourteen years and when I got bettered he said he would not marry me any more, and sent me to Chief Ododo to get a new husband since last year.

During this sickness, he made no attempt to maintain me where I was sent to cure myself. He wishes to divorce me because I have now no beauty as before. . . . The man who cured the sickness was not paid the money they fixed. I paid it, settling same by myself.

I wish to live with him still and don't want another marriage beside him.

Hope your kind favour will assist me in this matter.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
WADDA, her × mark.

The two sheets on which this letter was written were pinned together at the corner by an emblematic thorn.

The state of morals in some Ibo towns was shown by the evidence of Obonaya before Omokoroshi Court :

'Kamalo called us to Okachi's house, so we went. Iheoyewuoku was marrying Kamalo's sister, while keeping the girl's mother as his mistress as also her sister. Kamalo stated all these things to the people.'

The following three court cases illustrate some views on the subject :

Igoni stated on oath (Abua, October 20, 1913) : 'I have nothing to say again, and she is my old lover before, but a man cannot help. When he saw a woman he must have connection.'

In Omokoroshi Court (Case No. 176/05), Egbowu, when accused of taking Wamana's wife, said on oath : 'Truly, I have taken the woman because I like her and the woman the same to me.'

In another Abuan case (No. 61/13) a woman named Impomi made the following sworn statement : 'I was talking to one of my husband's brothers. Then defendant

knocked me on the ground and beat me with his hands. There is no woman in the world will live with her husband alone without going with another man.'

With Ibo and Kalabari alike it is the wife's duty and privilege to cook for her husband. Among the former each takes it in turn to prepare the 'chop,' which she places before him and tastes; after which he eats and she must wait till he has finished. Kalabari women usually omit the tasting and, on the day when the man sacrifices to his ancestors, only the head wife, who lives in the house which contains the shrine, may make ready his food.

Very strict rules of etiquette are observed throughout the Division with regard to the preparation, and during the eating, of food—this for a reason curiously removed from the standpoint of most white men towards black races. We are prone to regard these as lacking in the spiritual sense, but possibly deeper knowledge might dispel such an idea. In any case, while seeking the reason underlying some strange customs discovered among the Abuan, one of the party chanced to ask Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow a question which resulted in the following answer:

'Among Kalabari, Abuan and most Ibo, every food is regarded as inhabited each by its special spirit. How otherwise could it be that from these the life of man is drawn? In the yams dwells the yam spirit, in corn the corn spirit; but, of all foods, we are taught that that which is best loved by the ghosts is plantain fruit. This is the chop which all spirits like best. When sacrifices are made to the ghosts, this fruit is always the first to be offered.'

It is from respect to the indwelling spirit that the preparation and serving of food is hedged round by so many tabus.

Great care is taken that nothing of evil omen should transpire during the preparation of food. Should a woman in cooking for her husband chance to shed tears, she may not place the dish before him until she has plucked leaves from the sacred Odumdum tree. With these she must brush the ground all round the hearth to purify it from the ill effects of her tears; or, if none of the magic leaves are near

at hand, she may dip a manilla into a pot of pure water and sprinkle this around.

Another rule with regard to cooking among Kalabari is that on no account may sticks from the Oto Sin [1] fence be used for fires on which 'chop' is prepared. How serious an offence this is held will be seen from the following case heard before the Native Court at Degama on July 11, 1914. Plaintiff, Fitty Davis Braid, stated on oath :

'About three months ago defendant abused me that I have used Oto Sin sticks to cook my husband's food, therefore he rejected me to be his wife. Defendant repeated the accusation in a family meeting at Bakana before Chief William Davis Braid. The matter would have been settled by the family but defendant's mother interrupted.'

Chief John George Will stated on oath :

'Plaintiff is my wife. When she was with me, she used ordinary wood to cook my food, not Oto Sin ; but these sticks were mistakenly used to cook my food by her maid Tia, who is responsible girl. My wife was told that she was responsible for the girl's action, therefore my wife is to perform certain ceremonies according to our custom.'

Question by Plaintiff. 'Did Tia cook your food ?'

Ans. 'No, but Tia went out to get wood and brought Oto Sin sticks by mistake. Tia was a girl and could not afford to pay for the purgation [purification ?] ceremony. I offered to pay, but old women of the town told me that this was against the law. My wife therefore paid for the ceremony, which consisted in bringing seven fowls to be killed before the jujus responsible, *i.e.* Tamuno and the forefathers' Nduen Fobara. Seven manillas, seven eggs and twenty-one plantains were also offered. The plantains were used with the fowls for chop.'

Question by Defendant. 'When the girl brought the forbidden wood, could not the woman tell her so ?'

Ans. 'It is very hard to distinguish in these days Oto Sin sticks from others. Formerly they used sticks called Atabika which are obtainable at Fouché and are easily recognisable.'

[1] *Cf.* p. 153.

Among both Ibo and Kalabari good manners forbid the mentioning of anything unpleasant during meal times. On this subject a Kalabari chief said :

' Should one of our people come to claim a debt, no matter how pressing or how long owed, if he chances to find his debtor at chop, he will either go away altogether for the time or withdraw to a place where he can wait unseen until the man has finished his meal in peace.'

This statement was borne out by a case heard at Abaw-Ndonni Court, in which the accused, Chukuma, stated :

' I have assaulted prosecutor with my hands, but not with vexation. It was only that I was eating at the time the prosecutor came to talk ill words against me about the water-side palaver that it belongs to him, whiles it was own by me since long time ago.'

Prosecutor stated on oath :

' I only made enquire about this water during the time accused was eating in his house.'

Another thing which is strictly forbidden among Kalabari is for a wife, or indeed any woman, to seat herself upon the threshold ; for the spirit of the threshold is one of the chief protectors of the homestead. Should this rule be broken, the sinner must pluck fresh Odumdum leaves or take some of the dried palm from out of the roof thatch and rub these over the dwelling of the offended spirit.

' In most houses,' said Mrs. Gabriel Yellow, ' at every breakfast the head wife and husband give chop to the juju of the threshold before putting food in their own mouths. Also, before a chief offers sacrifice to his ancestors every eighth day, an offering is made both to the threshold and the king-post. Again, all housewives must see that their rooms are swept out before sunrise ; for the ghosts of the ancestors are always watching over their descendants, and would punish any woman in whose house ashes were to be found at dawn.'

Some additional points to be borne in mind during the preparation of food were confided to us by Amuneke of Owerri :

' If woman cook for husband, she may not whistle nor

must she take a bath until after he has eaten. This is old custom, because in ancient days, if a husband went out on war palaver and ate chop between the cooking and eating of which his wife had washed her body, he would surely die. Now in these days, when white man forbids us to war with one another, should a wife take bath between cooking of chop and serving it to her husband, the man would die, either by the falling of a tree or from snake-bite. Just the same happens if she whistles while she cooks his chop.

'Another thing that is thought very bad for our country is if a hen-fowl starts to cry like a cock. This brings great misfortune upon all the compound.'

It is somewhat singular to find among peoples of this region an echo of the ancient superstition known to dwellers in northern lands by the rhyme—

> 'A whistling woman and a crowing hen
> Are the greatest curse God sends to men.'

Amuneke continued :

'Also, if a hen drops eggs not in proper place but anywhere as she goes along, no woman is fit to eat this ; because, if she did so, very hard for her to get piccan more. When people find such a hen, they take it outside the compound or to the open road and kill it there at once. Men may eat of the flesh, but no woman, because, should she do so, that also would prevent her from bearing again.'

According to Chief Ada of Abaw : 'It is a matter of politeness that no woman of our people should pass before any man carrying a cooking pot. Even if the room or verandah, in which they are sitting, chance to be narrow, they usually say to her : "Why do you behave in this manner? Cannot you go round by another way instead of passing before us?" '

This was borne out by Case No. 687/13, heard at Omokku, in the course of which a witness stated :

'Three days ago she [the prosecutor] was holding a cooking pot to cook with. One Ogu asked her if she was not afraid to pass in front of accused with a pot? '

Eze stated on oath :

' Prosecutor was cooking chop and passed in front of us. One Ogu shouted to her and asked her if she was not afraid to pass in front of us ? '

An Ibo woman may never use her left hand in cooking.

No Ibo wife may cook for her husband during menses nor, among most tribes of this race, may a woman leave the compound at such a time ; because in so doing she would pass by some of the principal Ibudu, which are placed near the gate. Also she may not enter any room where protective medicines are kept ; since, by so doing, she would lessen, or even destroy, their power. She may not go to her husband's part of the compound or approach him while in this condition, nor may she touch the body of any man ; for, should she do so, she would not only render of no avail the jujus which protect him, but also sap his strength and virile powers.

A woman does not sit with her family at such times but in a special place by herself. If she wants anything, she comes into the room where they are, asks for what she needs and then goes away again. Should it be necessary for some reason to sit down for a short time among her relatives, she must first carefully turn the bench, stool or box upside down before seating herself upon it. To neglect this would be a grave breach of decorum.

Among Abaw Ijaw and Ibo, Okoba Ibo and the neighbouring Sobo, the rules as to conduct at such times seem to be enforced with special strictness. From all sides we were told, in almost the same words : ' It is very, very bad thing among our people for any woman to enter a house in such a condition. So soon as she knows what is about to happen, she must build a little hut of mats and live outside until all is over. Never may she touch chop which another will eat ; especially strong is this law against so much as laying finger upon yam or dried fish. Should she do this thing, it is impossible to say how great harm it might cause. So far we have never heard of such a case.'

How grave a charge it is held to accuse a woman of a breach of these rules, may be gathered from a case heard before the Abaw Native Court, in which Okuruwa of Abaw

claimed fifteen cases of gin as compensation from a fellow-townsman, Warreswar.

Plaintiff stated on oath :

'I went to Owuruma to see my family. I was soaked by the rain and road muddy. The towel I had on got dirty. I arrived at Chief Osai Obi's house and undressed myself outside and went in. Defendant never asked me anything while at the house. . . . On our way crossing over to Abaw Government beach, defendant came to the wharf and shouted with others for the canoe to turn. On arrival she questioned me if I had passed my menses. . . . She asked me to bring up the towel I had changed. I did so and, seeing nothing, she asked me to go. I was also asked by her to untie my cloth and stood rudely before her with others. I came to complain to my husband and took action against her for ill-treating.'

Kalabari, on the other hand, hold that a woman is purified by menstruation. The above rules therefore do not apply to this people, except in houses where Ibo jujus have been adopted.

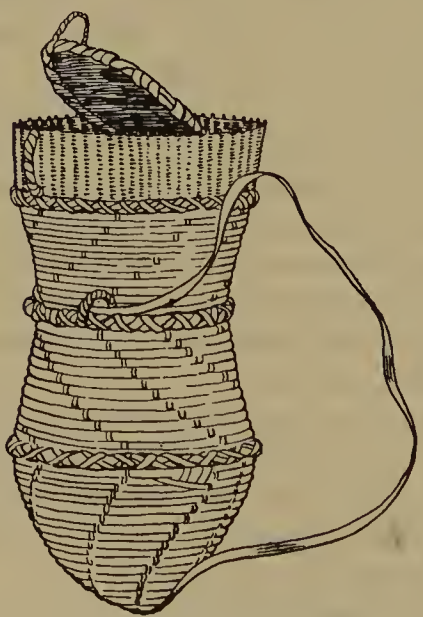


Fig. 13.—Etche Ibo Basket.

Fig. 14.—Ibo Woman's Comb with Copper Chain.

CHAPTER XVII

Coiffures

One of the first things to strike a visitor to this region is the variety of elaborate coiffures displayed by Ibo women. Should one choose to take the trouble to learn the meaning of the multitude of styles here in vogue, one can tell from a glance not only to what part of the Division a woman belongs, but something of her rank, age, condition and even personal character.

As already mentioned on p. 180, up to the time when she goes to her husband's house a Kalabari girl has her head shaved in patterns, like those affected by Ekoi maidens. From the moment of marriage, however, she is not permitted to arrange it in that way again. Among Ibo the style of coiffure ordained by custom for very small girls of the tribe is extremely simple. Most simple of all was the one seen among the Okoba Ibo at Itu. In this case the head was completely shaved except for a tiny round patch just above the nape of the neck, from the centre of which dangled a thin lock upon which five beads were strung. It was explained that this particular style had probably been ordered by the native doctor as a means of protection against illness or bad influence. It may, however, have had a more romantic origin, for, as already stated, among Owerri Ibo no girl, no matter how tender her years, may completely shave her head from the time of her first offer of marriage. A small tuft of hair must always be left somewhere ; a favourite place is the centre of the head, just above the forehead. Round Omo Dioga it fits close to the head in a cap-shape, formed of row upon row of tiny plaits. Another type is the somewhat more complicated one affected in the neighbourhood of Egbedda.

Still more intricate are the 'oyster-shell' coiffures especially favoured among Isokpo Ibo and those round Elele (plate facing p. 214 (*e*)), which denote that the wearer is ready for marriage. That shown in plate facing p. 214 (*b*), in which a multitude of little plaits are joined over a ridge of piassava to form a series of elaborate comb-like braids, is worn by maidens who have been prepared for the initiatory ceremonies—as also, in some regions, by widows who have completed their period of mourning and are beginning to grow their hair again.

The head-dresses of young wives vary with different towns. In some places, before the bearing of piccans, the little 'tassels' of hair are formed with palm-oil, while none is used for the long 'pom-pom' on the crest of the head (plate facing p. 214 (*c*)). Fig. 15 (B) shows an old Ibo coiffure much affected by Aro ; somewhat similar are those head-dresses arranged for dance and play, denoting a woman with many lovers. Fig. 15 (C) is a very old style of Ibo coiffure for dance and play. The hair is formed into the central helmet-like ridge by means of a clay foundation. No cam-wood is used. It is adopted as a sign of pride to announce the birth of a piccan, especially the first-born. Plate facing p. 214 (*f*) shows a still more elaborate example of this. Here the whole head is rubbed over with cam-wood paste, in which the lines in the helmet-like ridge are indented, while cowries are inserted down the back.

Among Etche Ibo, especially round Afara, the hair of matrons is arranged in small oiled discs, about the size of florins (plate facing p. 212 (*b*)). With young wives of this race at Akpu a very elaborate mode of dressing the head obtains for announcing the birth of a first piccan. A long string of agate beads, ending in an ornament formed of leopard's claws, hangs from a lock at the nape of the neck. In some parts of Ibo land only chiefs and their daughters or wives may wear beads plaited in the hair, and everywhere, we were told, the addition of leopard's claws in such a way is only permitted to women of a chief's family. Another example of this is that given in Fig. 15 (E). The same rule applies to chiefs themselves. Perhaps, however, the most

(a)

(b)

IBO COIFFURES.

(a) IKWERRI IBO WOMAN MOURNING THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND. NOTICE THE CLAY IMPRINTS OF HANDS.

(b) AN ETCHE IBO MATRON.

facing p. 212.

elaborate of all Etche coiffures was that seen at Okehin, which, except for the front tuft, had all the appearance of carved wood.

At Omo Akani, in Owerri District, good examples were found of coiffures denoting the various stages of grief. Plate facing p. 214 (*a*) gives that of a young mother after the loss of her first-born. The plaits are lengthened by contributions cut from the heads of sympathising friends and relatives. Plate facing p. 214 (*g*) shows the coiffure of an old woman mourning a son.

It is, naturally, by attending markets that the greatest number of styles may be obtained. It was a matter of great distress to one model that her coiffure should be recorded just at a time when it had lost its first beauty. She carefully explained that it had been dressed several months before and she was thinking about having it re-done soon, because the breaks caused by continually carrying her market basket had disarranged it. She promised to have it re-made for next market day, but time did not, unfortunately, allow of delay.

In the case of a girl of Asa, who had gone to her husband but had not yet borne a child the locks were thickly strung with cowries and rubbed with cam-wood paste.

In the Omadu quarter of Obogwe, in Owerri District, perhaps the strangest of all such 'coiffures of pride' has been adopted in token of the birth of a first babe (Fig. 15 (A)). The hair is drawn over a foundation in the shape of a Cossack cap, so thickly smeared with cam-wood paste as to give it the appearance of being made of rubber bath-sponge. It is kept in place by being bound round with yard upon yard of sewing cotton, hidden by the dye, through which ornamental hairpins are thrust here and there.

An example of head-dress greatly admired by Ibo, especially those of Owerri, is shown in plate facing p. 214 (*h*). This is also in much favour with Aro.

In many Ibo towns a special coiffure is adopted by those women who have passed the age of child-bearing. At Okporomini, for instance, a town to the north-west of Elele, the heads of such women are shaved all round, save for a

cap-like tuft over the crown, which is left to grow irregularly and may not be cut or dressed with oil, but stands on end in rusty tufts like those which cover the heads of widows during their time of mourning (plate facing p. 212 (*a*)).

Among Etche Ibo a more elaborate style of coiffure is adopted with the same signification. Here palm-oil may be used and the hair can be dressed in plaits or loops, but the plaits are usually worn flattened close to the head, and the loops are always irregular, rusty in tone and untidy-looking (plate facing p. 214 (*d*)). Some Ikwerri Ibo, especially in the neighbourhood of Isokpo, plait piassava in their hair to lengthen it. This is usually done at seed-time by maidens after their first initiatory ceremonies (see p. 188).

A bewildering number of variations exist, as may be seen from the scores of sketches and photographs taken to illustrate the various styles, but those already given indicate the chief points of difference. It is the greatest disgrace for a woman to have her hair shaved off, save only in sign of mourning. Among the Okrikans, members of women's societies sometimes shave the head of one of their number and drag her round the town 'dressed in a humorous manner' in punishment for ineradicable thieving.

Among most Ibo, should a woman's head have been shaved as a sign of anger by her husband or some enemy, so great is the disgrace that she cannot show her face in public. The murder of Court Messenger Akusobi at Elele Alimini in 1914 was, apparently, chiefly due to his taking the part of Oyiri Ina, whose plaits of hair had been cut off by her husband, Nhua Chiada, in a fit of temper. She therefore felt too disgraced to join in a play, to which she had long looked forward, and her husband, annoyed at his wife's abuse, made a murderous assault on her and killed the court messenger who interfered on her behalf.

The distinctive coiffure of Abuan women cannot be given with any certainty, since it appears to be tabu for any married woman of this race to show her hair. Custom decrees that it should always be covered by a cloth, which in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred is of dark blue. The Abuan are of noticeably different type from all others

IBO COIFFURES.

facing p. 214.

throughout the region. The women are rounder-faced and, to European ideas, more generally attractive than those of most other tribes. All but the poorest wear round the waist some ten to thirty yards of fine brass chain-work, of native manufacture, through which their loin-cloths are drawn and which serves to hold these in position.

Fig. 15.—A. Worn by Obogwe women, denoting birth of first babe. B. Old Ibo coiffure. C. Coiffure of pride on birth of first piccan. D. Young girl's coiffure. E. Chief's wife, Etche Ibo.

CHAPTER XVIII

Divorce and Widowhood

By Kalabari custom, if a woman wishes to leave her husband she must beat the drum called Kpokpo round the town, while stating her reasons. Case No. 229/14 exemplifying this came before the Degama Native Court on July 26, 1914, in which John Bob Manuel summoned his recalcitrant wife Dokku ' to give reason why you should not be compelled by the court to beat Kpokpo drum in accordance with native law and custom.'

Plaintiff stated on oath :

' Dokku Bob Manuel is my wife. She is leaving me without any reason and, according to native law and custom, a woman who leaves her husband without reason is required to beat drum. Dokku refuses to do this and I desire that she should.'

Throughout the Division divorce can be claimed by a wife on grounds of cruelty, neglect of proper maintenance, impotence and incurable disease [1] ; and, among Ibo, equally by husband or wife, on account of any serious crime proved against the other. The following case came before the Omokoroshi Native Court on August 5, 1910, and is typical of such :

Ikundaya *v.* Okpara Abadu.

Claim : ' Divorce on the grounds that defendant misconducted himself by stealing.'

Ikundaya stated on oath :

' Four months ago I was selling things at the Diobu market, when I heard a sound of drum and went to see. On my

[1] *E.g.* Case 420/15, Omokku Court—' Divorce granted to Mnabu of Abada because of the incurable diseases on her husband's eye.' In Case 163/14 divorce was granted for a husband's incapacity.

arrival I recognised the defendant my husband who stoled a demi-john of Tombo and was tied up by the owners who brought him to the market-place as a thief. I therefore claim divorce. I had not heard that he is a thief before.'

If an Owerri Ibo woman quarrels with her husband while cooking for him and, in her anger, picks up one of the Eku used to support the pot and flings this outside so that it breaks, for the space of a year she is driven out of the compound to a little hut in the bush, hastily built for her by her own people. During the whole time she may not eat with her husband, mother or piccan, 'no matter how big a woman she is—even if she born ten piccan!' All this time she must live alone, taking food only from one small girl, who must be of another family and who has never yet known man.

'After a year the wife must bring a chicken, some banga [palm nuts] which are never ripe yet, take four sticks of the kind which we call Oboba, light each at both ends; then put chicken and palm nuts into the pot and cook them over these four pieces of wood. All must eat of this. She herself tastes small, husband tastes and all sons and daughters do so too, as also her mother, brothers and sisters. After this she may go to her parents' house and eat there with her family, but never, never again can she marry her former husband. She must go and find a new one for herself, after having six months given her by the old one in which to pay him back his dowry. If it is not repaid in that time, a double amount is demanded. Suppose he paid £10 for her, she must repay £20, and so on. If her people do not want to do this, they bring one good goat to the value of about 30*s*., one hen, one piece of cloth called Lelage, two shillings-worth of cowries, one case of gin and two shillings-worth of palm-wine. With these gifts she and all her family come and beg the former husband, saying that she has done wrong and asking him to accept these and let her pay only the original dowry. If he takes them, it is a sign that he consents.

'Also, if, while cooking chop, a wife gets vexed with her husband and flings the pot at him or throws it away so that it breaks, then same thing happens. Never, never can he marry her again. Should the wife venture to eat with her

mother, son or any of her family before the year is over and the atoning meal cooked, there is no help for her. She will die within the year. The little maid, who served her during her time of banishment, must be kept and looked after for two more years at the bad wife's expense. When the child at length goes back to her own people, many gifts must be sent with her to pay for the trouble she has taken.

'In old days before white men came to our country, if the family of a woman, who had done such an evil thing, did not come and take her away at once—building the hut in the bush for her—she was put to death.'

If a husband told a wife to leave his house, it was considered sufficient reason for divorce. This is also granted should a husband accept the return of his dowry from a lover, who, by paying the sum agreed upon, *ipso facto* marries the woman. If a woman refuse a man after payment of dowry, she has to return the latter with the addition of a sum in compensation. Should she leave without doing this, all children afterwards born to her belong to the first husband.

A usual way for an Ibo man to divorce his wife is to rub chalk on her forehead and right arm and put a cap on her head. After this has been done, the woman may never return to his house again.

Among Kalabari a widow can never be remarried lawfully, but may be given as a secondary wife—preferably to the heir, provided this is not her own son, or, failing him, to some member of her first husband's family. Under certain circumstances she may return to her own people, but is always counted as belonging to the dead man's House, while all children subsequently born to her, even by a lover from another family, belong to that of the former husband.

Among Ibo it was a very strict law that a woman must remain in her late husband's home and is generally given in marriage to the heir, provided again that this is not her own son. The custom has of late been relaxed to the extent that she may leave the family on repayment of dowry ; but, even in this case, all children subsequently born to her belong to the House.

As with Ibibio, Ibo widows are often bequeathed as wives

to very young boys. Such a case (No. 285/09) is recorded from Omokoroshi Court. In the course of her evidence, the plaintiff, Aba, stated on oath :

' Defendant is my late husband's brother. On the death of my husband, defendant wished me to marry one of his little sons ; which is contrary to my wishes, as the boy is too small to marry a big woman of my size. Therefore I claim freedom and should be glad if defendant would produce his son before Court.'

Defendant stated on oath :

' About one year and six months ago my brother died and plaintiff was given to my son for marriage. She herself was willing and he has since incurred heavy enough expenses on her behalf. She was married by me to my brother. I paid all dowry on her behalf. [While my son is growing up] I wish plaintiff to accept any lover whom she may prefer ; by so doing, should she get any child, the said child will belong to us.'

Another case (No. 90/04) heard in the same court was that of Igwe Akani *v.* Akwo Ofonga. In this the plaintiff stated on oath :

' The woman was my father's wife, already married and not one manilla left needed on her. It is three years since defendant took her away and handed her over to another party for marriage. Now the wife in question has delivered forth a female child, so I asked defendant to return her and her child to me but she refused. My father's Guinea cloth [*i.e.* made on the Guinea Coast] is with her up to date and I also run enormous expenses amounting to 1,424 manillas on behalf of the said woman.'

The defendant, Akwo Ofonga, stated :

' My daughter was married to plaintiff's brother, but it occurred that my son-in-law had connection with my maid and put her into the family way, from which she died about three months later. I therefore led his wife to him, in accordance with our custom. Shortly afterwards, she too fell sick almost to be dying ; hence I went and took her, cured her and also handed her over to another party for marriage.'

Among Kalabari, should a son-in-law be proved to have entered into improper relations with his wife's sister, this is regarded as sufficient ground for the parents to demand return of their daughter without refunding any part of the dowry. The idea of marriage with a deceased wife's sister seems to be regarded with horror, and no example of any breach of this rule appears to be known.

The case of an oath exacted in revenge, on a death-bed, from an Ibo widow, not to marry the man chosen as her second husband was heard before the same court on March 3, 1909. In this the plaintiff, Woku, stated on oath :

'I am a native of Diobu. The defendant, Chimati, was married to my late father. After his death I spent the amount of a hundred and twenty-one manillas on his funeral, as is our country custom. Defendant refuses to marry me. This causes me to institute the action for repayment of expenditure.'

Minabene stated on oath :

'I was present when defendant's husband—plaintiff's late brother—died and the chiefs ordered plaintiff to bury the corpse and marry defendant.'

Defendant stated on oath :

'I was married to defendant's late brother. Part of his personal property was given to plaintiff for the burial expenses. My own late brother was indebted to plaintiff and, once upon a time, the latter came while my brother was lying abed ill and flogged him violently. Hence, before dying, my brother made me swear never to marry plaintiff. Therefore I declined to obey the order given by the chiefs in the family meeting.'

The following cases (No. 1659/11 heard at Elele, Nos. 870/12 and 287/10 at Omokoroshi) are typical of the unceremonious way in which Ibo widows are often transferred from one husband to another. In the first, the plaintiff stated on oath :

'Defendant's brother married me about four years ago. I left his house. I had sore on my right foot, so went to farm and stayed in our little hut. . . . Defendant came and said I should go away from the farm. . . . I went . . . and

defendant took all my things, viz. four mortars, four ladles, eight elephants' tails, a hundred and forty agate beads, four ropes coral beads, forty coco-yams and eighty yams. . . . When my husband died, no one took me in marriage nor supported me. I then approached my mother and asked her what to do, on which she told me to wait a bit longer. We sent for defendant. He refused to come. Afterwards he gave me to Ome Njor, who gave me to Otaba of Eheda, who gave me to one One Ehe of Eheda, who gave me to Waoma. The last named said that I was his property, but my mother asked : " How ? " and said that she will never agree to such a thing.'

(2) Igwe *v.* Okeke.

Claim : '£8 being damages for detaining the plaintiff's wife Wada five months ago.'

Igwe stated on oath :

'The woman in question, by name Wada Wolu,' is my wife—married to me by my mother. She was first given to my elder brother Chuku and after his death she was given to my father and after my father's death she was given to me. I have stayed six years with the woman since my father died. This year, about five months ago, the defendant took her.'

Inhuolu (mother of Igwe) stated on oath :

'I know that Chuku married the woman in question. I married her to him and after his death she was given to the plaintiff's father. After the latter had died also, the woman was given to plaintiff. Last year plaintiff got palaver with her and this year defendant took her. She has stayed six years with plaintiff. I saw defendant intending to build house for her and told him not to do so. I married the woman in question for my son when she was very small and I trained her out.'

(3) Ada *v.* Wanada Okorie.

Ada stated on oath :

'I was married by defendant's first son, and on his death was handed over to her second son, who died also. After this, defendant gave me to one Amafule who died in his turn, after which I was known as a widow. Defendant does not

allow me to marry whom I choose, therefore I summon her.'

Defendant stated on oath :

'I married the plaintiff to my first son and paid all necessary dowry on her behalf. On the first husband's death, I handed her to my second son, who died also. On the third occasion I gave her to one Amafule for marriage and he died two or three days ago. We have not yet performed all the necessary ceremonies on his behalf according to our country custom, therefore I never yet arranged another husband for her. I do not prevent her from marrying whom she likes, but do not wish her to leave my house, since I paid a great sum on her behalf.'

The case last quoted mentions a point of considerable importance to native ideas—namely, that, both among Kalabari and Ibo, as with Ibibio, a woman may never give herself, or be given to, another man until the ceremonies for her late husband have been completed. Any infringement of this rule is treated as a grave offence and entails terrible punishment and disgrace ; since such conduct raises a strong suspicion that the faithless widow was not guiltless of her husband's death. As an example may be quoted the case of Ahuche of Aro-Diobu, who brought a complaint of torture against a fellow-townsman named Wokocha.

10/11/14.

SIR,

I beg to bring this my humble complaint before your worship's kind consideration and assistance—that I married one Kamano who paid 1,200 manillas on my behalf but when I happened to fall into mischief, he claimed the return of his dowry. I have returned this amount of money with an interest of 400 manillas. That he went to Aro, our native land, after which I was made to understand by one Wokocha that Kamano is dead and that his people wished me to mourn for him as my husband. I refused this as we have been separated years ago. Then the said Wokocha caught hold of me, shaved off my hair and bound

a dog's skull tightly over my forehead. Then tied me with rope and put me inside a house where I remained for twelve days. He then received the amount of £4 from me by force and against my will, together with my coral bead value £2. This amounting to £6 in all.

Ihu stated on oath :

'The plaintiff is my daughter. Defendant accused her of taking another man as lover. When she was tied up with the dog's skull and they had barbed her hair, seven bottles of Old Tom gin—value £1 1*s.*—and forty manillas were given to the House members that they might loose the rope from her feet and hands and £1 0*s.* 2*d.* was paid to the old women of the compound. This is the amount paid by me and daughter for defendant's sake.'

The torture above mentioned, *i.e.* having a dog's skull bound tightly upon the forehead, is one much dreaded by Ibo women, since it causes intense agony and is never inflicted save for some crime peculiarly shameful according to native ideas. In the course of her complaint, Ahuche, who was young and of pure Aro type—thinner lipped and with finer nostrils than most Ibo—pulled forth a bag from the folds of her cloth and, bursting into floods of passionate tears, began drawing forth handful after handful of some substance that looked like black worsted or horse-hair stuffing for Victorian furniture. Enquiry elicited the information that this was the hair 'barbed' from her head by her late husband's family and brought as evidence of the harsh treatment she had undergone at their hands.

There is a special significance in the fact that the woman's hair was cut off by relatives of the dead husband, since, under ordinary circumstances, an Ibo widow herself shaves her head in token of grief, while that of a Kalabari is done by her own people. Among Ekkpahia, should she refuse to do this, it is taken as a sign that she is guilty of her husband's death. In the case of Wadohi *v.* Wokasa, brought before the Ahoada Court on March 15, 1909, the prosecutor stated that she was not permitted by the accused to cut off her hair, as proof that he laid her husband's death

at her door. In the course of her evidence Wadohi stated on oath :

' [When my husband died] about one year ago I wanted to cut my hair off ; [but] accused said it was I who killed my husband. We were two women he married. The other cut her hair, but when I went to cut mine accused would not permit it.'

An Owerri widow may on no account marry within a year of her husband's death. As with Kalabari, the corpse is washed and prepared for burial by the full sisters and brothers of the deceased. Until after the burial ceremonies a widow might not eat anything but corn, and this must be put into her mouth by the hand of a friend. She is forbidden to touch her body at all and, should she wish to scratch herself, must do it with a stick. This curious prohibition lasts for four days after the husband's death. Then she shaves off all hair from her whole body and may eat as before.

During the year of mourning she must hold a knife in her hand whenever walking outside the compound. At the end of this time she may plait her hair again and marry if she chooses.

No woman in mourning for a relative ever paints her face or body with the black patterns which are regarded as a great aid to beauty. This prohibition was exemplified once while sketching types of coiffure at Omo Akani in Owerri District. Most of those previously drawn had been indicative of various depths of mourning—for a first-born son, for a sister, a sister-in-law, etc. When asked as to whether the last model also denoted loss, the onlookers answered in chorus : ' Do you not see that she is painted ? Would a woman in mourning paint her face ? ' So strictly is this rule held that there is even a special Owu among Kalabari, called

Wari	fa	gbaw,	buruma	miama.
House	lost	of a person,	black dye	make not.

' This juju lives in Angulama River, and drowns the relatives of women against whom it is invoked, with the result that they may not use black dye again.'

The fact that secret rites, carefully guarded from the knowledge of any male, whether white or black, are performed by Kalabari widows, came to our ears owing to an accidental remark made during a court case. So soon as my wife learned of the existence of these, she set to work to discover them ; but for over a year was unsuccessful owing to the fact that she was unwilling to give a pledge of non-disclosure to any of the opposite sex. Near the end of our tour, however, a convert to Christianity consented to give the wished-for information, which was later corroborated from other feminine sources and will be found incorporated in the following account :

Immediately after the death of a Kalabari chief, the ' lawful ' wives, who have hitherto tended him in the Bio-kiri (inner room) must go forth without letting their eyes rest upon the corpse. So soon as it is certain that the last breath, on which the soul is thought to pass forth, has left the body, each widow goes to her own family to ask from them the two Okuru cloths which custom decrees must be worn during the first period of mourning. As already mentioned, this cloth is woven of palm- or screw-pine fibre, and, save that the stripes are black instead of white, resembles that wrapped round the body of a woman before the birth of a first babe or worn by witches and wizards at their midnight dances.

While the corpse is being washed, rubbed with cam-wood and painted with black pigment, the ' lawful ' wives are brought together in a small room named Kala-Bio, which forms part of the dead man's house. Here all are stripped and examined by old women, chosen for the purpose as being skilled in the Ekema (mourning) ceremonies. Then the Okuru cloths are wrapped round them and a piece of board taken from a broken canoe is given to each.

A curious prohibition attaches to widows, whether ' lawfully ' married or not, from the time of ' tying ' Okuru cloth. All are forbidden to open any box in which clothing is kept, whether their own property or that of another. Should it be necessary to take out any garments, either in order to air them or for any other purpose, this service must be

performed by a mother, sister or other near relative who can be trusted.

When the corpse has been borne forth for burial after its lying in state, to be described in the next chapter, each widow goes back to the home of her parents and stays in a darkened room, set apart for her use. The smallest in the house is always chosen for this period of confinement and across it a rope is tied, to separate the Ekema woman from the female relatives who attend her. She may not cross this bar on any pretext, but sit and sleep upon a piece of broken canoe, from which custom forbids her to move. During this time she is attended by her mother, should the latter be alive, or, failing a nearer relation, by the head woman of her family. Within the rope, by the widow's feet, a small hole is dug, into which, whenever she takes food or drink, a part must be placed for the use of the dead man's spirit.

Only broken utensils, such as a half plate or cracked iron pot, may be used, and for the whole six days the unfortunate woman may not relieve nature between sunrise and sunset, so usually only takes enough to keep life within her. Should necessity prove too strong for tradition in the matter, it is taken as a sure sign of unfaithfulness to her late lord. It was stated by one informant that, in such a case, the small hole made for food and drink offerings also served for such a purpose, but this was indignantly denied by all others. A further discrepancy occurred in that several informants declared that in olden times the tabu held for the whole six days. In any case, when leaving the house for this purpose, the Ekema woman must take care not to let any part of her body touch water or be seen by anyone.

The position ordained during the period of mourning must be maintained unchanged. A piece of broken iron is placed in the left hand, the arm bent upward at the elbow, while the left knee is drawn back and the right leg stretched out straight. So soon as the iron is transferred to the right hand, the left leg must be stretched out and the right knee pulled back.

When the burial rites are finished and the Kala Ekkpe

play is ended, the chief women belonging to each ' lawful ' wife's family come and lead their bereaved relative down to the water-side.

For this ceremony a fathom of other cloth is tied over the Okuru, forming a big knot on the right-hand side ; while the head is covered with a further cloth and over that a small plaited mat. This is said to be the reason why ' lawfully ' married women were not allowed to cover their heads ; because head-covering was thought to be sign of widowhood.

Two small round balls, about the size of a bantam's egg, made of shredded Okuru cloth, are carried by each woman under her armpits, while in either hand a piece of broken iron is held.

At the head goes an old woman proclaiming :

Iyate ereme so !
Married women go away !

Owi apu so !
Men folk go away !

Bu kara a bo so !
Body pregnant go away !

When the water-side is reached, the Ekema Bilema (secret Ekema ceremonies) are performed. Large canoes are brought, placed stern shoreward, so that the widows can step in without wetting their feet, since it is strictly forbidden for the foot of an Ekema woman to touch flowing water. With them go the old attendants, women relatives and intimate friends. No man is ever permitted to be present on such an occasion. Each widow crouches in the bottom of the boat, supported by her relations, for no Ekema woman is allowed to sit down. As she enters, each strikes her pieces of iron together three times, calling as she does so on the name of her husband ; then takes her place in order of seniority—the chief wife at the bow and the others according to rank.

When the juju place, known as Ekema water, is reached, each woman strips herself, hands the pieces of iron to her ' midwife ' and dives in turn into the water beneath the

canoe, coming up on the other side. As she reappears, she calls upon the name of her husband, while her attendant clashes the two irons. This performance must be repeated seven times—or, as stated by one informant, five times. Should head or any other part of the body touch the canoe in passing beneath, this is taken as a sign that the widow had wronged her husband and, as a result, the people of his family ' catch her.'

In such a case, should the woman belong to a powerful House, her relatives come to the rescue as she is being taken off for punishment, and a fight will probably ensue between the two families. After a while heads of other Houses would rush in to arbitrate and, as a result, both sides would send representatives to appeal to the judgment of the Aro Chuku juju. Should the woman not come of an important House, however, she would be severely punished in consequence of this supposed proof of infidelity. Usually she was either sold on the spot or banished to Aro Chuku, where she became a slave.

It is forbidden to carry out the mysterious rites during rain, and if the weather unfortunately prove unfavourable the members of the dead man's family go to a native doctor to ask the cause. Usually he replies that one of the widows is guilty of some evil toward her late husband. Rum must then be poured out before the ancestors to beg them to stop the rain.

When all the widows have dived the prescribed number of times, the canoes return to the starting place, and again care must be taken that no widow wets her foot in landing. On stepping ashore, each again strikes her pieces of iron and calls her husband's name in order to announce to his spirit that the ordeal has been well and properly passed. Then all go in procession through the town, the ancient women wailing their mournful warning as before.

After the room of seclusion is reached, the widow may lie down upon a native mat behind the separating rope, but even yet she may not stretch out both legs at the same time. She eats thrice a day, but only of food cooked in a broken pot over a small fire made close to the place of mourning.

She may still not wash save in a small native pot set nearby, and this ablution must be performed without changing her position. The ' big woman ' of the house may occasionally put a little water upon her, but, if so, it must be well water ; no rain- or river-water may touch her skin except on the occasion, above described, when she is taken down to the river-side. The bathing water must not be allowed to fall to earth anywhere save into the little hole dug to receive food and drink offerings for the husband's ghost. No person is allowed to eat scraps left over from the Ekema woman's food ; all must be burnt with fire, down to the minutest particle.

For five days the widow remains behind the cord in the little room. Every day the floor is swept up, but the dust must be kept in one corner and cannot be thrown away. It was unanimously allowed that, from now on, an Ekema woman was permitted to relieve nature before dawn and after dark, but still at no time while the sun is in the heavens ; otherwise this also was taken as proof that she had wronged her husband, without confessing her sin or making the necessary ' sacrifice of purification.' No Ekema woman is allowed to speak to anyone. A small girl attendant is always at hand for necessary service, but even to her signs only may be made and no word spoken. During this time nothing belonging to the late husband or his family may be used. All food, etc., must come from the widow's own relatives, unless she had ' spoiled her marriage ' during her husband's lifetime—*i.e.* if she had had connection with some other man or was no longer a maid when she went to her husband, or, again, if, after being lawfully married, she had stolen money hidden in the ground by her spouse. ' For these two sins she must suffer the same penalty and cannot carry out the Ekema rites as faithful women do.'

On the sixth day a widow's hair is cut off by her own people, who afterwards break up the cup, plate and pot which she has been using. The pieces are then buried in a special place set apart in the bush, together with the ashes of the fire by which she sat mourning, after which the whole room is swept and cleaned. All the while the nearest

female relatives stay with the mourner, tending and comforting her in her sorrow. She is never left alone even for a moment at such a time. If all others must go away, the little girl still remains.

On the seventh day the widow puts on a cloth rubbed with cam-wood dye, which she wears for the next ten months—*i.e.* the Kalabari year. During all this time she must keep to the house, never going out except at night, and then only with her face concealed beneath a covering of plaited reeds, worn basket-like over the whole head. When the year of mourning is over, a second 'ten months' is ordained, during which only soiled baft may be worn. It is a strict rule that fresh cloth may never be put on, only old pieces previously used by some other widow.

CHAPTER XIX

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

(*a*) *Kalabari*

When a Kalabari chief lies sick unto death, some of his people make ready canoes and set out for a place called Oru-Sangama Bu, which lies near Ekulama. This spot is chosen because, in olden days, it is said much juju dwelt there. Thither the chief women of the House, together with one of the Oru-Kuru-Gbaw—their own, should the family possess one—go in order to learn whether the sick man will live or die. In the mangrove swamp the little party lands and goes through the bush to the northward. On the way they glance around with eyes of terror ; for there, sooner or later, they are sure to see the sick man's wraith, no matter where his real body may be. If the spirit appears to be coming toward them they are glad, for this denotes recovery.

So soon as the wraith is seen, the priestess asks it : ' Are you suffering from natural sickness or from witchcraft ? ' To this the spirit answers, making known the best medicine to cure the malady or destroy the evil charm. If, however, the shade is seen to glide away from those who come to question it, they know that it is a sign of the sick man's death. There is no further help in such a case.

This was done in March 1915 for Chief Oruwari of Bakana, better known to white men as William Davis Braid. With the inquirers on this occasion went the priestess Dakoru. All declared that the wraith was seen, but, alas ! gliding farther and farther away.

' When a man is about to die, he can often tell the bystanders : " Such and such a person, or thing, is causing

my death." For instance, when the sister of Chief Oruwari found that he was so weak, she went near to the bedside and asked : " What is the matter with you ? " He answered : " My sister ! There is no hope for me. I am about to die. A certain man is killing me." After this he called the Sangama people round him and said : " I want you to know it is Okpara who is causing my death." '

As mentioned in the last chapter, so soon as a chief has breathed his last, the ' lawful ' wives go back to their people, leaving only the secondary wives with the corpse. These are permitted to stay till midnight. At that time the full sisters and brothers of the deceased, together with his ' lawful ' sons from the age of twenty-one upward, come in and drive forth all others before carrying the body to that part of the compound set aside by custom for ' streeking ' the corpse. The space reserved for this service is called Oto Kubu, and is always by the fence at the back of the compound. The washing of the dead may only be carried out in this particular spot, at night-time, when no one can see. For this ceremony water is brought in an earthern pot which may not be set upon the ground, but must be kept from touching earth by means of an Ezikila (a thick roll of cloth, wound into the shape of a carrier's pad). A piece of fresh cloth is first dipped into the water and then wrung out, and with this the body is washed until quite clean. Care must be taken that not one drop of the water falls to earth. In the case of an Accra man named Baddoo, who died at Degama station in 1915, serious trouble was averted with great difficulty because the water with which the corpse had been washed was thrown upon the ground.

So soon as the body has been cleansed, an Okuru cloth, black-striped like that worn by widows, is passed between the legs and tied by a string, or narrow strip of cloth, round the waist. This service may only be rendered by the dead man's sisters. When this has been done, the ' lawful ' wives come back, each one bearing a fathom of cloth, provided by her family, to wrap round the body.

Over all are laid some of the most valuable cloths chosen from out of the dead man's property. Suddenly a cannon

is fired, and at this signal the body is lifted by sons and brothers and carried forth to the Wari Kubu (hall or anteroom opening into that containing the shrines of the ancestors). Before the entrance three flags have been hoisted, and the corpse is laid within upon a bed covered with rich cloths—the head towards the ancestors, while the feet point doorwards.

Relatives and connections greet the body with wailing cries, loud weeping and the beating of drums, especially those proper to the societies of which the deceased was a member. If he had been a great warrior, the Peri drum, Akoma, plays his 'signal names,' together with those of all his ancestors which yet linger in the memory of man. This is done to make known to the ancestral shades that a new member of the family is coming to join them.

The Peri drum is set either to right or left of the bierhead. If the deceased was a chief of importance, the Ekere, *i.e.* war-canoe drums consisting of a set of five instruments, are beaten at the same time. These two sets of drums continue to be played, at dawn and evening, for six days.

So soon as the corpse has been laid in state, the 'lawful' (Iya) wives take their places at its head in order of rank, either sitting upon the ground or on a fragment of broken canoe; while the other wives move about, attending to the guests, or sit on low stools a little farther off. This is the only occasion known to us on which it is permitted for any Kalabari woman to seat herself upon the ground; otherwise such a proceeding is strictly prohibited, since, we were informed, it is looked upon as disrespectful to the Earth Mother.

The 'lawful' daughters and sisters of the deceased take their places in two rows on either side of the corpse—the eldest daughter nearest to the head and the rest in order of birth. Each holds a handkerchief heavily sprinkled with scent, with which she fans the body. Every 'lawful' wife holds in her left hand a broken knife-blade or iron hook, during the performance of the Ekema ceremonies, from now on until the corpse has been carried forth for burial. All this time each wife must maintain the attitude described in

the last chapter, *i.e.* one hand and knee drawn up, while the opposite leg is outstretched.

Should the dead man have belonged to the Sakapu Club, the members sing over him their farewell song :

'Baba. Wamine ikiap. Wa ke biobarama.
'Goodbye. We [are] friends. Us not forget.

Wari dikidiki.
House look after.

Iere efetegbaw so so-ama.
You dead man gone sky-home.

Soju ine-te ekaw-fe :
[In] Sky realm you will be able to see your death [cause] :

Tomi ebabebe Tamuno ebabebe.'
[If] people caused [or] God caused [it].'

When a rich, free-born Kalabari woman dies, her family may call the Sakapu Club to come and give an Owu play in her honour ; but this can only be done by the wealthy, as the expenses of the ceremony are very heavy.

While the corpse lies in state, all the chiefs of the town come to take a last farewell and bring gifts. Should the family refuse to accept any of these it would be taken as a great insult, since rejection would mean that the giver was under suspicion of being, in some way, guilty of the death.

All through the night the watchers sit in the positions ordained by custom, singing and wailing. Should a son have been away from home when the death took place, the family wait yet another day and night for his return. Otherwise, so soon as the corpse has been brought to the Wari-Kubu, it is announced that the funeral play will be given next day, and the burial takes place soon after dawn of the morrow.

In olden days no coffin was used. The body was laid upon mats of woven rushes. The blood of fowls and goats was sprinkled over the feet, then more mats wrapped round, after which it was placed in a canoe and taken to the bush to be buried. Before sunrise men were sent on ahead to dig the grave, that all might be ready on the arrival of the mourners.

CELEBRATION OF THE PERI "PLAY" AT A FUNERAL. KALABARI.

facing p. 234.

(See also p. 302.)

The big torque-like manillas of twisted bronze, called Obbaw, are worn by the women of the Amakiri, Odum and Okore families round their necks during the funeral rites. Should members of other Houses wish to do this, they must pay for the privilege to those whose right it is. So soon as the burial ceremonies are over, these manillas, which are of great value, are collected once more and laid before the memorial shrine.

For two of the principal Kalabari families, those of Amakiri and Odum, the latter of which is sometimes called Barri-Boy, special funeral plays are given. The most important of these is called Mine, and it is performed in conjunction with the play Kala ('small') Ekkpe ('old') Siaba ('weak'), in which only members of the Sakapu Club may join. The name was thus explained by several Kalabari chiefs: 'It is called small, because it is intended as an imitation of the "big play," which was that of the man himself when alive. The image of Kala Ekkpe Siaba goes first on such occasions, imitating a dying man, too weak to walk. After him comes the head woman of the family, followed, in order of rank, by all the others, wearing the Obbaw. Twice a day the dance is held, at about seven o'clock in the morning and three in the afternoon.'

Should a family not be rich enough to carry out these ceremonies at the time of burial, they can be performed later, even after the lapse of several years. Kala Ekkpe Siaba must, however, eventually be played for every chief.

When the dead man had made pilgrimage to Aro Chuku, a special tune was played at his burial. For former Peri and Aro Chuku members also chalk is rubbed up the right arm and a manilla placed round the right wrist, on which feathers and blood from sacrificial fowls are smeared, while an eagle's feather is fixed in the hair on the right of his head. Coral beads, gold and silver ornaments, yard upon yard of silk and the finest of cloths are laid in the grave, together with a plate, knife, tobacco, snuff and a bottle of gin. The choice of offerings is explained as follows by several of the chiefs:

'Whenever a big man dies, his people always put tobacco,

gin and everything he specially liked, even plates and dishes, in the grave ; but seldom or never food, because that is provided by the sacrifices made to him on each eighth day.'

With salvo on salvo of cannon the body of the dead chief is laid on its back in its last resting-place and the earth smoothed over. Above the grave Kalabari place a native pot, while with Ibo this also is interred.

For the rest of the day after a chief has been laid in the grave, no woman of the household is permitted to weep, lest pity for her should hold back the dead upon earth, instead of allowing his spirit to go peacefully and unhindered to the ghost realm. If a woman cannot restrain her tears, she must sacrifice a fowl and lay this at the feet of the corpse. Fowls and goats are always slain at such a time to please the departed, but those brought in atonement for weeping are offered ' to purify the body from the stain of tears, so that these may have no power to hold back the dead.'

At the burial rites of a chief who was not a member of any of the great clubs, only the wives kill fowls. For others, any relative, or even friend, who wishes to do so, can bring offerings ' to please the dead man ' ; while all chiefs of the town collect powder and cloth for the funeral. For non-club members no ceremonies are held, save the firing of a signal cannon at night-time to announce the death, and some at dawn next morning. Then, after the body is lowered into the grave, another salvo is given, a third on returning to the house and a fourth during the afternoon. On the six following days a salvo may also be fired at morning and evening.

' They shoot cannons and guns to show the ghosts that it is a great warrior who comes amongst them. The sacrifices are given to propitiate the jujus. Since the big juju [Awome-Ka-So] forbade the killing of men, they offer animals. If they did not make these big ceremonies, the dead man would not have such a high rank among the ghosts. It always ruins the House if the ceremonies are not carried out, because the ghosts are vexed.'

In cases of poverty the death of a chief is not announced

at once, but concealed from the townsfolk until it is possible to get together all things necessary for the burial rites.

So soon, after the first ten months of mourning are over, as the family can bear the expense, they start the ceremony called Kopinai. For this a great table is spread, upon which every known kind of food and drink must be placed. Each chief sends a representative who wears European dress and may only talk English. The meaning of the festival was thus explained : ' Now our dead father has become a very great man indeed ; so great as even to dine with white men in the ghost world.' The ceremony was lately performed for Chief John Amakiri. Only ' lawful ' sons of the deceased may be present at such a time, and the fact that one, whose legitimacy was afterwards questioned, was proved to have taken part at the Kopinai feast, was brought up in court as sufficient defence of his claim to be of lawful issue.

Months, or even years, later the Peri play may be given, and this is again followed, so soon as the family can support the expense, by a parade of war canoes, which go morning and evening as far as Isokpo and Aloa water-side. Gifts are made to the market people on these occasions and sacrifices offered to the ' Big Tree of Isokpo,' against which offenders of market rules were slain. Before starting on this parade, however, one keg of gunpowder and one bottle of rum are provided for each chief's canoe. Meantime a feast is held in the house of mourning to which friendly chiefs are made welcome.

When all is ready for this festival the relatives send down to Fouché Island and order a carved image of the deceased to be made by a member of the Pokia family, to which alone is entrusted the privilege of providing these strange memorials. So soon as word is received that the image is finished, preparations are made for its reception. A canoe, manned with relatives, sets out secretly and conveys it from Fouché to one of the compounds of the home town, which may never be one owned by a member of the bereaved family. This is usually done at night-time, but if by day the image must be carefully covered over so as to pass unseen. On the fourth day after its arrival the

kinsmen, who have returned from the water parade, go thither, armed as if for battle, followed by the women of the House, shouting and singing. A mimic fight is held with the people of the compound where it has sought shelter, after which the image is carried off in triumph by the relatives and installed in the shrine prepared for its reception.

A great feast is held to celebrate the home-coming, while the family sing that they have brought their father back in safety from those who had taken him prisoner. At this ceremony special hats, made of goat skin and known as Ajibulu, are worn.

The arbour-like shrines in which the images are set are called Arua. The figures themselves are the Nduen Fobara (*i.e.* ghosts' faces), while the chamber, which lies at the back of the Wari Kubu, is named Ikpu. Within each Arua is placed a small table with bottles, glasses and sometimes plates, set there for the use of the Shade when he returns, according to general belief every eighth day, to enjoy the offerings. In front are set three conical pillars, their tops indented to form a little cup-shaped depression for the reception of libations. Round their bases are laid the great twisted manillas called Obbaw, while lesser manillas of varying sizes lie near by.

When a family is too poor to defray the considerable cost of one of the carved images, the clay pillars themselves, or sometimes only one of these, can be taken to represent the ancestors and given the name Nduen Fobara. As previously stated, no image may be erected to a chief who has died from smallpox ; only an empty shrine is set up.

The Okrikan equivalent to Nduen Fobara is to be found in those curious pots, decorated with human faces, supposed to be inhabited by the forefathers, in which offerings are placed as described on p. 245.

Reference has been made on pp. 80 and 140 to the sacred stools, which were the earliest form of representing the ancestors. Such stools are also worshipped among Ibo, especially those in the possession of chiefs or native doctors. Some are regarded as the dwelling-places of the household

ANCESTRAL SYMBOLS. KALABARI.

(For photograph of the Nduen Fobara see p. 76.)

facing p. 238.

Alose. They are carved out of solid blocks of wood in most intricate designs, but no representation of a face was seen on these. (See Figs. 17, 18, and 19, p. 287.)

When a chief made pilgrimage to Aro Chuku he brought home, in proof of his journey, some strangely shaped axes, called Offor Chuku, made, save for a small iron blade or number of blades, from root knots or knobbed branches. These are said to represent the Long Juju itself, and are passed round the head of an accused person, while he or she is ordered to clear him- or herself by taking oath of innocence. 'Should one swear falsely, the spirit will catch him.' After the death of such a chief these axes are laid before his Nduen Fobara, as was done in the case of the late head of all the Kalabari, old Chief Amakiri.

For those who are not rich enough to buy from the Amakiri and Odum families the right to hold the Kala Ekkpe Siaba and Mine plays immediately after the funeral, it is permitted to hold these later for three days without the payment of fees.

Just before the war canoes start for Isokpo and Aloa the widows are confined in the house. On this occasion, for the first time after the death of the chief, they are allowed to paint their faces and bodies with black dye and camwood. During this period of seclusion food is provided for them three times in each twenty-four hours.

On the day of the deferred Mine play the principal widow goes out to seek the head chief's quarter, followed by all her children and relatives. They sing songs praising the late husband and his family, beating the pottery drums called Kuku, which may only be played by women, and dancing to this music. After visiting the head chief, she goes with her party to a second compound, and so on right round the town. She is followed by the other wives in order of rank, each party visiting the different houses in turn, one after the other, but never meeting.

When Mine and Kala Ekkpe Siaba plays are carried out soon after the death, each 'lawful' widow must stay during the celebrations in her own small, dark room, where she is visited by friends and relatives while the Kuku drums are

beaten. Visitors go on to the second wife after paying condolences to the first, and then continue, in order of rank, until all have been visited. The wife herself may not come forward from her dark corner, but a sister or very close relation may go in to her. Into the ear of this privileged person the widow whispers some song which she herself has composed for the occasion, and the relative goes out to the Wari Kubu and sings this to those visitors who are not near enough kin to be admitted into the presence of the widow herself.

Both women and men shave their heads in sign of bereavement, after which their hair is allowed to grow for ten months, *i.e.* the native year. If a chief dies, not only his widows but sons, daughters and, in former days, personal slaves must also shave. Most other members of the household do likewise, but these are not forbidden to clip the hair again before the ten months are over, while widows must wear it combed upwards and left undressed. At this time, also, all ornaments are forbidden them. During the period of mourning, men wear blue baft and distant women relatives white, but widows, unmarried sisters and daughters must wear Okuru cloth dyed with cam-wood for the first ten months. 'This is done to show how painful the death is to them. They must not change this cloth during the whole time, nor re-dye it with cam-wood. Afterwards, as already mentioned, widows wear soiled white baft for another year. Sometimes this is stained on purpose, but, if possible, it should be that already worn by a former widow of the family.'

Even when the actual funeral rites are at length over, which is usually not until years after burial, the head of the House goes every eighth day into the Ikpu and pours libations and places food before the ancestral images. Should the head-man be unavoidably absent, he sends a small boy with a message to his principal wife, ordering her to provide offerings with which the child may carry out the rites in his stead. 'In olden days a chief never missed performing this service in person, unless he were kept away on war palaver. No matter how urgent the business which took him from

home during the week, he always returned on the eighth day in order to make the ancestral offerings.'

Once every seven years a goat is killed and the blood sprinkled in front of the Nduen Fobara, amid feasting and dancing. In the case of dead members of the Sakapu or Peri societies, this is done to the accompanying roll of the long Akoma drums.

The importance attached to the carrying out of all prescribed rites, and the ill-effect which neglect would cause to the dead man's spirit, are dealt with in the next chapter.

Old free-born women are buried just like chiefs. For such an occasion women have their own dance, which they are permitted to hold for one day. The Sakapu drum may be beaten and the club songs sung on such an occasion, but the special head-dresses of this society may not be worn at the burial of any woman. The corpse of a free woman is borne home by her own people from the husband's house, because they say : ' She was not a slave and must now come back to her own place, where she belongs.'

No burial is accorded to those unfortunates who die in childbirth. In such a case the corpse must be carried forth at night, with all secrecy, through the back door of the house, and thrown away in the ' bad bush,' as is also done with still-born children and suicides. Young maids and pregnant women may never see the body of one so accursed. By native law all the property of the dead woman must be destroyed by fire, lest the ban of sterility should pass to any who might afterwards make use of such things. This applies to all goods save only a few of the very finest articles, which are set apart to be given to the head woman of the Amakarasa juju. The latter is always one of the oldest women of the town, who has long since ceased from bearing and whose property they can therefore safely become without inflicting the curse of sterility.

Corpse bearers always wash before re-entering a house. Those who have carried the bodies of ' twin-mothers ' must pluck leaves from the sacred Odumdum tree and rub these over their bodies ' for purification.' After this they go down to bathe by the river-side. Were this not done,

it is thought that the calamity of twin-bearing might pass from them to any woman with whom they come in contact.

It is said that ' when some men die a certain mark may be noticed upon the body. The flesh looks decomposed at once, and people say : " Ale forsakes this man." Such a corpse must be carried away from the town and buried afar off.'

At Bonny, according to the testimony of Mr. A. C. Braide :

' Cases of rum and gin, with plenty manillas and other valuable properties, are buried at one end of the grave, which is made very long. The treasure is placed several yards away from the corpse, and separated from it by a fence of sticks. If the family prospers, it is never touched ; but in case of poverty a House-meeting is held, sacrifice made to the spirit of the dead and he is begged to announce, through the mouth of a native doctor there present, whether he is willing for the property to be dug up and, if so, whether it will bring prosperity to the House. Should the ghost make answer that he does not wish this to be done, the funeral offerings are never touched ; no matter how great the need of his descendants. Such an action can only be undertaken with the consent of the whole House. If a man were found to have gone alone to a grave with the idea of stealing any part of the buried goods, he would be bound hand and foot and thrown into the river.'

Among Kalabari, the treasure, whether of manillas, rum or other effects, was not laid in the grave, but put into a small canoe and buried beneath the floor of the women's house in the dead chief's compound. This was done at night-time and with great secrecy, only the big men and women of the family knowing the hiding-place. ' Sometimes the chief buries such a canoe before he dies. That is his bank. Now some men bury a safe instead of a canoe.'

It is perhaps worth noting here that, although, as a general rule, great respect is due to age, yet with Kalabari as with Efik and other Ibibio it is possible to outstay one's welcome in life's caravanserai. As Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow stated : ' Should grandparents or great-grand-parents grow too old, it is common knowledge among our

people that young members of a family will die off without other reason. In Bakana, for instance, there is an old, old, old woman, Atia by name, all of whose children have died save one alone who was left to bury her. Now all people pray that she may die first ; but if not, when her time comes, no ceremonies will be carried out at her burial, because she has grown old too much.'

Some interesting details as to Okrikan funeral rites were supplied by Chief Sampson Adoki :

'When a chief dies, the body is washed and prepared for laying in the coffin. In olden days no such thing was needed ; the corpse was laid upon mats [Ibilla] made from the soft inner fibre of palm-stems, such as are used now to roof our canoes. Others were placed above, and then all bound round.

'After this had been done, three corpse bearers [Duen Paruapu] carried the body on their shoulders towards the entrance of the compound. While thus bearing it forth, one of the big men of the family came and asked the dead man to tell out what killed him. "Is it God?" he questioned. "Come, swear." Then, if the bearers touched the ground with the foot of the corpse, this was taken as an affirmative answer. If, however, the body stayed still up on their shoulders, they asked again : "Was it witchcraft?" Should the foot touch earth at this, they questioned further : "Who killed you? Is it one of the family? We are ready to deal with the man!" Then all the relatives gathered round anxiously waiting, while the Duen Paruapu stood motionless, holding their burden. Suddenly a movement swayed the bearers—and they rushed forward while the crowd gave way in terror before them till, at length, they drove the corpse up against some man or woman. No sooner was anyone touched than the crowd fell upon him and killed that man one time. After beating him to death, they threw the broken body into the creek. After this, the dead body was carried back to the grave dug beneath the floor of his room. In this a chair and plate had been placed for the use of the ghost.

'When the burial was over, the Ekere drum must be

played for seven days. Then the Kubuti play was given. For this the relatives put one of the small cannon into the dead man's canoe and then paddled up and down the river, firing into the water.

'Immediately after the death of their husband, widows shave their heads and are then confined in the Wari Kubu house [the Okrikan kitchen]. This time of seclusion is called Keme. So soon as it is over, the widows may come out, but must wear blue baft for a year, after which they may put on ordinary dress and marry again.'

According to John Kalio : 'In olden days, when a chief died, our ceremonies were not so cruel as those of the Ibo. Human victims were not killed. Goats, rams or cows were slaughtered and the blood sprinkled on the forehead of the dead man. The downy feathers of fowls were also put on the forehead.

'On the death of a great warrior, they got a war canoe and put drums in the bow. The Ekere war drum was beaten. The drummer addressed the dead chief and related all his victories and glorious deeds, to inform the ancestors of how great a man is coming amongst them, as well as to let the living know how big a chief has died. Meantime members dance up and down in the canoe and a feast is given.

'When a chief dies, money is collected to buy gunpowder. The household gathers together. All the women of the family sit round the corpse singing—the head wife first. The "lawful" wives wash the body in the Jukuru room, the chief's own apartment. No drop of water must touch the ground. The body is laid on Ibilla mats, rubbed with cam-wood and painted with black paint, Buruma. They then dress him and bring him outside the door. Goats are killed by cutting off their heads, which are laid on plates, while the blood is poured on the corpse's feet. The blood of fowls is poured out before it.

'A big deep hole is dug under the Jukuru room and he is buried therein, together with a chair, manillas and a bottle of gin. Cows are never killed at such a time. That is forbidden.'

(*a*) (*b*) (*c*)

(*a*) & (*c*) OKRIKAN KALABARI. (*b*) KALABARI.

(*See also p. 238.*)

ABAW IBO.

(*See page 256.*)

ANCESTRAL SYMBOLS.

facing p. 244.

At the present day long blue shirts are generally worn in mourning.

A carved stick, called Duen Toro ('dead face,' corresponding to the Kalabari Nduen Fobara), is set up as a memorial to most chiefs in the Demanga, or ancestral shrine. For others the strange pots, Oko, adorned with human faces representing the lineaments of the deceased, are provided as receptacles for offerings. Sacrifices are made to these once a year, and also at any other time when native doctor or juju priest announces 'Ancestors want sacrifices,' whereupon an offering of fish, or whatever the ghost may be reported to demand, is laid before the posts or within the pots.

These Duen Toro or Oko are said to form the principal juju of the compound. They are usually made about six months after the man's death, if the family is rich enough then to hold the feast of consecration, at which the spirit is asked to come down and enter into the pot.

Some unusually fine specimens of Oko were discovered at the Okrikan settlement of Amisaka, near Bakana; but for many months all efforts to secure even a single specimen were rejected with scorn, even though a large sum was offered. Later, at Ogu, it was possible to purchase some 'unconsecrated' ones from the maker, and finally, after the juju *débâcle*, several ancient and authentic specimens were procured for far less than the sum formerly offered, and have now found a home in the British Museum and Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford.

'If a man had sores he was thrown away into the bad bush [Nonji, "rottenness"], but the Oko pots can be made for him just the same. Money must be paid to the priest of Nonji before the corpse may be thrown away there.'

No funeral rites are performed for a suicide. In such a case the body is stripped and carried on a roughly made hurdle to a place in the bush called Ariapu-sibiko, where it is left.

CHAPTER XX

Death and Funeral Ceremonies (*continued*)

(*b*) *Ibo*

When the soul (Maw) passes out on the last breath of an Ibo chief, relatives gather round for the washing of the corpse ; but this is done in the death chamber itself, not outside as with Kalabari. When all has been prepared, the body is borne forth and laid upon a high ' bush table ' (Ojo) raised for the purpose before the Obiri shed. This is decked with cloth of two kinds, white baft and ' real India,' and is hung round with strings of manillas and strips of Ommu (young palm-leaves). The latter decoration seems intended as a symbol of rebirth to the bereaved family as well as a means of warding off evil influences from the dead.

Should a son or other near relative be away from home at the death of the head of the House, fires are lighted beneath the table, which is formed of sticks set wide apart. Special leaves are sprinkled upon the flames, so as to produce a thick smoke. A body thus treated becomes dry and leathery and can be preserved above ground until the return of the absent relatives.

From Case No. 233/16, heard at Elele Court, it appears that the old custom among Ikwerri Ibo was for the corpse to remain upon the Ojo for five to six days, during which period the widows must watch over it night and day. Now, however, soon after the body has been laid upon this corpse table, the Ada (eldest daughter) calls together friends and relatives and leads them in procession round the compound, beating Igilla and singing the praises of the dead. Later, they follow her out through the entrance gates, and round the whole quarter, setting forth his mighty deeds.

This ceremony is very like the procession of the eldest-born at Efik funerals. On return to the Obiri, the Ada's husband lays an eagle's feather upon the corpse, to be buried with the chief. It is the duty of this son-in-law to provide yams and plantains for the feast, but he may have nothing to do with slaying the offerings. This service, whether the sacrifices be human beings or animals, must be performed by a blood relative of the dead chief.

The following account was put together from the testimony of several Ibo chiefs :

First the head of a dog is struck off and the blood drawn in a circle round the corpse. This was said to be done 'because dog is a wise animal, a good watcher and keen-sighted to see danger drawing near.' Dogs are much valued by Ibo for their supposed power of clairvoyance, seeing evil spirits or scenting the approach of danger, even when afar off. Those with strongly marked 'eyebrows' are thought to possess special occult powers. Such are called 'four-eyed' and held to be of particular value. The sacrifice of a dog is therefore supposed to bestow keen and far sight, as well as the power of clairvoyance, upon the dead.

A cat is next killed beneath the Ojo, 'since its eyes can see in the night-time.' It is thought that this sacrifice will confer upon the dead the power of vision in the dark world to which he has gone. An eagle is slaughtered to give keen sight by day, and a fly to endow the spirit with many-sided sight. A parrot is slain, 'since this is gifted with a voice, so that the dead may not be voiceless among the ghosts.' These are the animals slain 'for the dead man's head,' and must be put to death by his children. The rest are slaughtered by relatives on the mother's side, though actually provided by the deceased's own family or by 'members.'

A goat is killed in honour of the feet, which are looked upon as a sort of separate entity because they move the whole body. Of one who has grown rich it is often said : 'He is a man with lucky feet' or 'He is blessed by his feet.' This is said because the feet carry him to places where

he prospers. So far, indeed, does this personification go that, in olden days, a rich chief used always to buy a slave 'for his feet.' This man was called Okku and was regarded by the chief as next to his own son. Such a slave was always given a share of property after the death of his lord. Occasionally, too, a chief made sacrifice to his own feet, a custom which also prevailed among Kalabari. At such times a dog or chicken was killed and cooked, together with yams. The chief invited people to partake of the meat, a small portion of which was laid upon his feet. After this, Okku knelt down, caught up the food between the lips and thus devoured it.

The right hand of a great warrior or hunter was also thought to be endowed with special powers. To it the name of Aka Ikenga was given, and sometimes, though rarely, an offering was therefore slain 'to the right hand' of the mighty departed. (See p. 98.)

One of the saddest of the sacrifices was that made 'for the dead man's skin.' Among the slave wives of most prominent chiefs was, as already mentioned, one always addressed by her husband by the name of Aho'm, *i.e.* 'my skin.' This one was destined to be killed and flung into her husband's grave. The rest of the slave wives and those women slaves devoted to the service of the dead man in the ghost realm had their arms and legs broken and were then laid alive at the bottom of the grave. It is significant that the men who broke the limbs of these unhappy sufferers prided themselves on thereby showing strength and bravery.

From the front of the Obiri shed, where the body lay, to the end of the open square, human sacrifices might be seen hanging from posts or trees. According to the account of one well-known white resident at Degama, who about twenty years ago stumbled on the funeral ceremonies of Chief Mpi of Nkarahia, human victims were even hung from trees on the main road, thus forming an avenue leading up to the compound.

This was later corroborated by Doctor A. Browne, who attended Chief Mpi and stated that the victims were hanged

head downwards from the trees by a rope passed through their heels. In one case at least life was not extinct on the third day.

For a very rich man a further batch of slaves was slain at the place where the dead chief used to bathe ; for one less well dowered with worldly goods a single slave sufficed. Custom ordained that the throats of these victims must be cut in such a way that the blood flowed down into the bathing-place. Others, again, were slaughtered on the spot where the chief had been accustomed to eat, sleep and sit to receive his guests. ' If wicked boys tried to upset the House at the chief's death, these were often chosen out to be buried with him.' Since the coming of Government the blood of a fowl or goat is perforce substituted.

Yet another slave was slaughtered beneath each of the juju trees. This was the dead man's parting gift and last ' good-bye ' to the juju. A specially fine slave was usually set apart as a funeral offering to the late chief's Ogrisi tree, which represented his Ajokko-ji and therefore was closely connected with the worship of Ale. These victims also were slain by cutting the throat, so that the blood should flow round and fertilise the roots of the sacred tree. The flesh of the offerings was afterwards eaten as a sacrifice. Those buried with the chief were, naturally, not eaten, since their bodies must be left complete to serve him in the spirit world.

When all the prescribed sacrifices had been made and the grave was declared ready, trumpets were sounded and the Obudu drums played. It was explained that this was done, like the beating out of the ' signal ' names of the ancestors upon the Peri drums at Kalabari funerals, to call the ghosts and inform them that a powerful chief is coming to join them. There is no idea here, as recorded from among those Ibo studied by Mr. N. W. Thomas, that the trumpet is blown to inform the dead man that his grave is ready ! After the corpse had been lowered on to the bodies of the writhing, broken-limbed slaves laid in readiness at the bottom of the pit, earth was thrown in and the whole smoothed over. The grave was, however, not yet properly closed,

for a secret place was always left for the reception of a final offering. To seek this the ' strong men ' of the family sallied forth and went far afield till they caught a man, if possible from some other tribe. His head they struck off and brought home to set in the little space reserved for it. A part of the blood was also collected and brought back to be sprinkled over the now completed grave.

The place of burial was always within the Obokoro house —the room where the dead chief used to entertain strangers. After the burial, a great feast of human flesh, together with that of goats, fowls, yams and plantains, was given to relatives and friends. The skulls of all victims slain for the funeral rites ' were placed as ornaments in the Obiri shed.' The principal posts and inner roofs of these were sometimes covered with skulls. For instance, the father of Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow, who was a great warrior, once ' went fighting in Ommu Nwa part. There he took many prisoners, whom he afterwards gave to his friend Chief Wawuje of Alimini. The latter killed them all and used their skulls to decorate his Obiri.' Chief Yellow saw at least fifty of these trophies still in evidence only a few years ago.

A particularly horrible detail, given by the white ' eye-witness ' already referred to, concerning the funeral rites of Chief Mpi of Nkarahia, was the avidity with which fresh blood and flesh torn from the bodies immediately after death and scarcely roasted were devoured by the celebrants on this occasion. It is only fair to state that this detail was not corroborated from other sources. Wilson Mpi, a son of the dead chief, while half-pridefully admitting the general accuracy of the statement, naturally showed some reluctance to confirm the more horrible details, adding in excuse : ' I was myself too young to notice at the time, having not yet left my bed, being then only about the age of one week ! I have, however, heard from all our House that a very great feast was given for my father's funeral.'

For the first three months after death, it is ordained that the widows of the deceased shall sleep in the Obiri, to guard the Ojo, though permitted to go to their own house in the

day-time. The reason for this rule is that the spirit of the dead chief is thought to come back occasionally at night during this period to rest upon the Ojo, and might be grieved did he not find his wives in attendance.

At the end of this time the erection is torn down and the posts of which it was built, together with all the cloths, etc., hung round it, are burned in a spot set aside for this purpose at the back of the compound. Next morning the widows come out of the Obiri and go to market. They never go back to sleep in the Obiri again, but must wear mourning cloths for a year.

In most Ibo towns it is usual to hang up, against the roof of the Obiri sheds, the chair, market-basket and fufu-mortar of each dead woman of the household, together with the barrels which contained the gunpowder used at a chief's funeral ceremonies.

Another object, often found among Ikwerri Ibo in company with the last named, is an elaborately carved tablet known as Nyama Ahia or sometimes Ahia Osimiri (the river market). This was explained as a ghost offering, the object of which was to remind the ancestral spirits of the need for constant activity in increasing the prosperity of their descendants, whether by trade or the granting of plentiful crops. (See p. 299.)

It is said to be an Ekkpahian custom that, at the death of a husband, the cloth which has covered the body is taken up and one end laid over the mouth of the corpse, while the other is tied round the neck of the widow or widows. The reason given for so doing is that, should one of these have been unfaithful or know the cause of death, the piece of cloth will bring sickness upon her. An example of this custom was given in Ahoada Court (Case No. 134/13), in which the plaintiff expressed annoyance that his sister alone should have been singled out for this rite, which showed, in his opinion, that she was suspected of having caused the death of her husband.

Among some Ibo, when a big warrior dies the whole family goes into the bush. The small girls take fine leaves and flowers with which they dress themselves, the men wear

bark cloth and coco-yam leaves and the women bush leaves. A great play and dance is then held.

All men who die in the 'forbidden month'—namely, that which was considered sacred to Ale—become Ojjaw Onwu (bad deaths), a name also given to suicides. At first sight it might seem strange that there should be a month in which it is forbidden to die, but it was explained :

'It is tabu for anyone to die during this holy time. Most of all does Ale forbid the death of the unfruitful, whether man or woman. The bodies of such must be thrown away with all secrecy and may not be buried.'

A similar rule exists among Kalabari during the day on which an Owu play is given ; while among Okrikans, for the seven days on which the feast of the Earth Goddess is held, a like law obtains. During these seven days no thief may be punished ; even a murderer is safe for the time. Should a man die, they say he may not be buried, but must be flung away into the 'bad bush' set apart for outcasts. Only if the surviving relatives are willing to bear the cost of the purificatory ceremonies may he at length be laid to rest.

If an animal dies, or if anything is broken, during this time, it is thrown away on a certain place. Then after seven days the people of Tamunowari's shrine clear it away.

Besides those Ibo who died in the forbidden month, it was ordained by native law that the bodies of women who died in confinement, of children who died before cutting teeth, of lepers, and of men who suffered from elephantiasis of the scrotum, might never be buried but must be thrown away into the 'bad bush.' Twin children, those born feet foremost, and those whose upper teeth were cut before the lower ones were also condemned to be slain and their bodies flung into the bush. That such customs are even yet not fully stamped out is proved by the following case brought before the Native Court of Elele in October 1916. In this case Wachuku stated on oath :

'Last August the first eight accused [head-men of Ndelle] sent Chief Ebani to call me that they might give me their laws. The head people of all the quarters of Ndelle were

present. They told me their reason for calling was that they might give me the laws they intended to carry out so that we might know [these] and there might be no palaver between us. . . . They said that thenceforward the following laws should be kept by everybody in their town :

' (1) That all twins should be killed.
' (2) Children whose upper teeth were cut first should be killed.
' (3) Boys born with only one testicle should be killed.
' (4) Children born feet foremost should be killed.
' (5) That we should buy slaves.
' (6) The body of any woman dying in confinement should be thrown into the bush.
' (7) If native doctors said that the spirits of those already buried were giving trouble, the corpses should be dug up and burnt.

' The accused said that all in the town, including the Christians, should keep these laws . . . and that they would give me trouble if I reported the affair to Government. . . . A month ago they were throwing dead bodies near the Government road.'

Anwene gave confirmative evidence on oath, as did Okku, who added :

' They also made the law that all corpses should be put on a table for five or six days and should be watched by the dead man's wives. Any person who died from certain swellings should not be buried but thrown into the bush. All children who died before any teeth appeared should be thrown into the bush. Anybody who had elephantiasis of the testicle should not be buried but thrown into the bush. . . . They said that all people in Ndelle should keep these laws. They told Wachuku, who is the Niger Delta Pastorate Mission teacher, that he would get into trouble if he did not keep these laws.'

Later Anwene also stated :

' Chief Ebani said that the Christians might go to farm on Eke day, and might keep female dogs . . ., [but] all twins should be killed, and twin-mothers taken to bush and have

their hair shaved. When the hair grew again they might return to the town. Then the heathen got annoyed because Chief Ebani refused to see that the Christians kept the two laws about the keeping of Eke day and the forbidding of female dogs.'

Nsirim (after confirming the above on oath) added :

'Wachuku said to them : "Do you forget that this is Government time?" They answered : "No. We do not forget. We will obey Government in doing all Government work such as road-making and the building of rest-houses ; but these are our laws from olden time and we will keep them." One of the laws was in favour of slave-dealing. They said that slave-dealing was a usual thing, and that everybody who wanted a slave should buy him.'

Woke (the first accused) stated :

'We are the townspeople of Ndelle. Wachuku is the teacher. When he said he wanted to be a Christian, we said "Yes." We said he could destroy jujus that belonged to the Christians ; but he went and destroyed many more, so was sent to prison. After he came out of prison, Chief Ebani sent for the Christians and us, the heathen. We told the Christians : "We do not like twin-children. If they die we will throw them away. If they live we will give them to the Christians. We cannot also keep children whose upper teeth appear first. This is forbidden in our town. We also do not want to keep children who are born feet foremost. You Christians can keep them." Before Government came, we always threw men who died from elephantiasis of the scrotum into the bush, and did not bury them. Now we do not know what to do with them. We said the same about people who died from leprosy, also those who died from swelling sickness. We told the Christians : "You can work on Eke day. We also allow you to keep female dogs in the town." '

According to native law it is a grave crime should a husband fail to report the death of a wife to the dead woman's kin. Such a case was heard before the Native Court at Omokoroshi on August 18, 1910. In it the plaintiff, Amadi, claimed from Makele 'eight hundred manillas and one goat,

ANCESTRAL SYMBOLS, KWALE IBO.

SYMBOL OF AWGENNE, THE SOBOSUPREME GOD.

facing p. 254.

being damages for an unlawful deed on plaintiff's sister according to country custom.'

Amadi stated on oath : ' Defendant's late father married my sister and, according to our native law and custom, whenever the woman died, report is to be made to us, so as to be present at her burial. About two months ago the said sister, married by his late father, died and no report made to me and I did not know when they buried her. This is strictly forbidden in our country custom, and whenever such is happened the party [who] married the woman [has] got to pay a certain amount.'

A woman was usually laid to rest in the compound of her son ; but, should she have no grown-up son in whose house she may be buried, she is generally carried out to the place where the grave has been dug for her in the bush. Such a fate is very different from that of the outcasts flung away without burial, whose spirits become Akalogi or Ekwensu. The idea appears to be much the same as that of the Greeks concerning the unburied dead.

Boys and girls who died before reaching maturity were buried within their parents' houses, usually in that of their mother. House burial indeed seems to have been accorded to all save childless folk who left no descendant to carry out the funeral rites, those whose deaths were due to contagious disease, and those who died within the forbidden month of Ale.

Thieves are not always deterred by terror from seizing the property of the dead, though such a crime is regarded as very grave.

It appears to be the usual custom for an Ibo to bury during his lifetime such property in goods and manillas as he chooses to set aside for the use of his spirit in the ghost realm.

Abaw people alone in the Division show carelessness in disposing of their dead. Throughout this region case after case may be found in the court books recording charges of throwing corpses into wells, the river or bush. Among this people, too, the forefathers' shrines are held in less reverence than with other tribes, most of which have a special name for the ancestral images. Throughout Isokpo, Agwa, Iba,

and Aloa, for instance, the posts set up to represent the ancestors are called Nhu-Nda Madu (' face father's person '), though the last word is sometimes omitted. By other Ikwerri Ibo they are known as Ndiche, or Ndichie. Among Etche they are termed Nde Echi (' people of old '). Elele men call them Didi Ayi (' fathers our '), while in the Okkpaw-Omokoroshi region the term Rokani is used. These posts are made from several varieties of wood. In the neighbourhood of Rumoji a species of ironwood is always employed.

The Abaw Ibo of Ase, on the Ndonni Creek, make curious pots to the memory of their ancestors, on which the features of their forefathers are represented. (See plate facing p. 244.)

The Ekkpahia Ibo of Ahoada set up clay figures, called Dapiri, in memory of the dead. It is noteworthy that only forefathers are commemorated in this manner. No posts are raised to the memory of ancestresses of the race.

Among Okkpaw Ikwerri Ibo a peculiar type of ancestral shrine obtains. This consists of a room, the door of which opens on to a roofed-in space surrounded by a low wall, which forms the gathering-place of the family. Beneath its shadow many come together for their noontide rest, and there, at nightfall, games are played and tales told, while the women prepare the evening meal on small fires, which brighten the scene with their cheerful glow. The walls of both parts are elaborately decorated, either with patterns of white mosaic in fragments of pottery or cowries or by gaily coloured plates inserted in the clay. Within the ' ghost house ' are the emblems set up in memory of the ancestors, and also, usually, a few seed yams and corn-cobs chosen from those set aside for the new season's planting. In the neighbourhood of Ewawfe the ancestral shrine forms the recognised storehouse for the family's seed yams, which may there be seen hung from the roof or laid in piles before the images.

Among the Mbolli, according to Chief Olomba of Alessa, ' when a chief dies we get cow and goat and fine gunpowder and dress the body in its best clothes. In olden days, before

Government came, we always killed slaves, one for a small chief, two for a big one. We never went beyond this number. Wives were never killed on such occasions.'

Amid that strange non-Ibo race the Abuan it is customary to cut down all plantain trees growing near to the house in which a death has occurred. With them, too, there is a close link between the ancestral shades and the fertility of the crops ; for the chief ceremony of the year, always held before the planting of new farms, is carried out on what, to this race, is the holiest spot on earth—namely, a little glade in the bush outside Aiama in which the graves of Abua and Agana are still to be seen, marked by posts and offerings.[1] Near-by, in the same quiet spot, lies Egule, though her exact resting-place is no longer remembered.

For all peoples of this region, indeed, death is neither life's end nor even 'a sleep and a forgetting' ; but only an incident in the eternal life-cycle.

Among Abuan, too, it appears that human sacrifices were never made at funerals. To quote the words of the Priest-King Oku of Amalem : 'Among our people, men were never killed at burials. What would be the sense? The man who died was a man. He is gone from his friends on earth. Why kill another to put on top of him ? '

[1] *Cf.* p. 31.

CHAPTER XXI

The Soul, Ghosts, Dreams, etc.

Nowhere in the world is the influence of 'the viewless ones who rule the silent places of the earth' more strong than on the West Coast of Africa. Nowhere too, perhaps, is the dividing line between the seen and unseen world less fixed or impassable. For people such as these there is no 'gateless barrier.' The ancestral shades still play their part in the life of the community, passing at will from one plane to another and helping in such mundane matters as trading ventures and the catching of plentiful hauls of fish. In the words of a well-known chief:

'When a man sets out for trade, fishing or indeed any business, he has always in mind that the spirits of the ancestors are round him, ready to help in difficulty or danger and eager to bring prosperity to the House.'

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the part played by ancestral shades in the life of their descendants. To quote Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow:

'After death we think that the soul can come back at any time to visit his family. At every dance and play the spirits of the forefathers gather round to enjoy the offerings, and on each eighth day [Fene Bene] libations are poured and chop spread in the household shrines by the head of the family, who also acts as priest.'

Before most meals, too, both Kalabari and Ibo take a little food in their fingers and throw it on the ground, calling upon the names of the ancestors and inviting these to eat with them. This is done partly in thanksgiving for gifts already granted and partly to pray the ancestors to bear in mind their needs and send further supplies. These beneficent ghosts are said to appear, in visible form, to their awe-stricken descendants at the call of modern witches of Endor

and pronounce judgment on all matters of dispute brought them for arbitration. To quote an instance from among Kalabari :

In the case of Oboro-Tobo (Chief John George Will) *v.* Igonikaw, the plaintiff claimed the return of certain gifts which the defendant denied receiving. So the ghost of the senior ancestor of the family was invoked to give judgment through the mouth of the head of the House.

In important cases, or in disputes not with individuals but between families or towns, those who wished to appeal to the ancestral shades used generally to go to the shrine of the Long Juju at Aro Chuku, since this was thought to be a place of special sanctity, where in consequence the spirits of the dead could more easily enter into communication with the living. Recourse was had to this juju also when children died apparently without cause, or a man experienced persistent ill-luck in his dealings.

Another spot of considerable repute where ancestral shades might be consulted was a cave in a hill near Awka, where the great Eziri juju lived.[1] Information as to this is given from hearsay only. According to Obi Amara :

'The old woman, who serves the juju, is called Mbafor. She shows the native doctors medicines to cure people. When any of the people round here die, their spirits always pass through the Eziri cave into the realm of the dead. When a big man dies, a woman cooks chop and the chiefs send sheep, goats, chickens, etc., to the juju. If anyone dies and the sons do not know where the money is buried, they take sheep, etc., to this juju. The questioners must not cry. If they cry, they can never see their father again. If they do not cry, then the dead man comes out. You are fit to see him and know him and ask questions. But you cannot hear what he says, only the priestess tells you his words—where the money is and what is going to happen that year ; who will die and what piccans will be born.'

[1] The information given here is rather different from that about the priestess of Ezira, where there is apparently a lake but no cave ; *vide The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. II, p. 53. If the same place is referred to, later information points to the existence of both.

On another occasion the procedure adopted at this shrine was described by Obi Amara as follows :

' There was once dispute about the ownership of certain property in our house. Therefore the juju bade the disputants go to the Cave of the Spirits, where living men may hear the judgment of the dead. This cave is in two parts, separated from one another by painted pillars. In the first division the questioners waited ; the second was left empty for the ghosts, while in between, by the pillars, stood the priestess. After the proper invocations had been made, all men could see the spirits, who came from out the darkness at the back of the cave ; but no man could hear them speak, save only the priestess, who questioned them and gave forth their answers. I myself have twice been present when the ghosts were thus called up to give judgment.'

This priestess is a personage of great importance. She it is who ordains the time when the bush shall be fired for the making of new farms and gives permission for the eating of fresh corn, new yams and native pears—thus forming yet one more of the multitudinous links between the ' Pale of Proserpine ' and the sunny realm of Ceres.

Just before our departure, in March 1916, Chief Tom West India of Buguma came, obviously in a very perturbed state of mind, to complain of a matter which touched the honour of his forefathers. A woman of the family, named Sokari, who had been induced to join the followers of the self-styled prophet Elijah II, had, so the chief stated, broken away from the traditions of her people so far as to speak disrespectfully of the ancestors. According to his account, she affirmed that the ' old kings ' came to her in a dream, saying that they had appeared before the prophet to pray him to let them pass into heaven ; but he refused, because their descendants were ' hardened of heart ' and would not join his party. Saddest of all was the case of Old West India, father of the present chief, who, when he knocked upon the heavenly gate to beg admittance, ' was driven away and even smacked on the face by the angels, because his children refüsed to join the new movement ! '

The incident is indicative both of the general attitude of

CHIEF QUAKER BOB MANUEL.

CHIEF TOM WEST INDIA.

mind with regard to the ancestors and the cunning of the pretender in so much as nothing would be so likely to move people such as these in a direction contrary to their inclination, as a belief that, by so doing, they were benefiting the shades of their forefathers. Chief Tom West India himself, who had hitherto remained unshaken by personal threats and, what is hardest of all to a native, the disapproval and scorn of many of his people, was reduced to the utmost wrath and grief at this insult offered to the ancestors.

'Before Government time,' he said, 'had a woman spoken such words, she would have been sent to the Aro Chuku juju and put to death. No help for such an one in old days.'

An instance of this feeling was given lately in a charge (No. 91/15) brought before the New Calabar Court that some women sang abusive songs and beat Flag John Amakiri with Offinge shells, because he had used offensive words about a dead chief, George Amakiri.

Chief Bagshaw Yellow stated on oath :

'In our country a word is not to be used against a dead man. If such a thing happen, the sons and House people have to send and ask and, if the people do not apologise, they have to use words against the dead of that House. If they ask and find it true and the others beg, they have to make a ceremony [of expiation].'

Among the Okrikans also, 'If you cast an aspersion on the ancestors, it is the worst thing you can do, and an inquiry is held into the affair at once.'

Throughout the whole region it is a matter of common belief that the soul leaves the body by the mouth on the last breath at death, as also at times in dreams. Some very powerful wizards are said to be able to bring the dead to life again after the soul has gone forth by placing 'medicine' in the eyes, nose and mouth of the corpse, in order to draw back the spirit into its forsaken tenement.

Among all natives hereabouts a man is thought to have two souls, roughly corresponding to the Egyptian Khu and Ka—*i.e.* the higher spirit or Ego, called by Kalabari Teme and by Ibo Maw, which is eternal, and the vital spirit or life force, which perishes with the body and is termed Bio-

Mbaw (' inner heart or ball ') by Kalabari and Nkpuruk-Obi (' ball heart ') by Ibo.

According to several Ibo chiefs questioned on the subject, the last named is the spirit (breath) inside a man, which may temporarily leave him on account of sudden fear or accident, but soon returns ; for, should it stay away too long, the man must die.

When death comes, Ibo say ' Nkpuruk-Obi mbafule '—*i.e.* ' the spirit has flown.' Under stress of great terror, too, the same expression may be used ; for example, a man suddenly attacked by a leopard said in relating the experience : ' My spirit flew away at sight of the beast.'

Npuruk-Obi is also the ordinary term for ' heart,' while the words Teme and Maw (more usually Onyinyaw) also express ' shadow,' which is thought to be the outward visible sign of the soul within. As an Elele chief stated :

' A man's shadow is his spirit made visible and walking outside his body. When no light is shining, the Maw stays inside ; but by sunshine or moonlight it comes out to walk by one's side. There are two principal parts of a man, body and spirit. Both like to walk abroad in times of brightness rather than by dark.'

Ibo people say that it harms, and might even kill, a man for another to tread upon his shadow. The same word is also used to express a reflection in water or looking-glass, both of which are held to be soul-pictures, but by which, for some occult reason, a man cannot be harmed in the same way. It is partly on this account that mirrors are so often borne before the principal personage in a juju play, in the hope that malignant spirits may be tempted to wreak their evil will upon the reflection while the man himself is left unharmed. In much the same way, brides, robed in their finest and borne round in canopied chairs, carry printed pictures before them in order that they may act as a shield against the envy of evil ghosts, which may strike down these while the bearers pass by scathless. It is said that in former days, before this protection was adopted, the pride of a bride was often brought to naught through exciting the envy of an evil spirit, especially the ghost of a barren woman

or one who had died in childbirth, which sought to strike her as she was carried by during the Ajiji play, thus bringing sickness or rendering her barren for evermore.

The terms Teme or Maw are often used to express the word 'ghost.' When the body of a suspected person is burned, as is done with proved wizards and witches, the astral dissolves also and the ghost can therefore never again come back to earth. A medicine-man can call the shadow-soul by magic to his shrine and there so injure it that its owner will sicken or die. Of a man who possesses the power of sending out his spirit into other shapes, such as leopard or elephant, people say: 'His Teme [or Maw] flies out to join these beasts.'

Agate beads of antique make, so highly valued throughout this region, are said to be worn, like their modern imitations, for protection; because, it is stated, 'often the soul of a man longs for these things and, in such a case, if none can be obtained to hang around him, there is grave danger that the disappointed spirit will flee away.'

There is a king of the ghost realm, called by Kalabari Nduen-Ama Yana-Gbaw ('owner of spirit land') and, by Ibo, Eze Ala Maw, who rules alike over chiefs and commoners. Death (Kalabari, Ffe; Ibo, Onwu) is the messenger sent to call men before this dread master. He is said to appear to the dying in the form of a skeleton, unrobed and bearing a great staff with which he strikes his victim at the base of the skull.

'There is a ferryman, called Asasaba, who bears the souls of the righteous over the River of Death. Very evil spirits cannot cross this water, but stop on earth in order to plague people.' These malignant ghosts are known as Om'Abara ('children of juju'), and when such trouble a family with sickness or continued misfortune the sufferers go to a native doctor to ask how their tormentor may be appeased. The medicine-man usually orders them to make sacrifice by the roadside near their dwelling. The offering generally consists of strips of cloth, bones, fish, yams or pumpkin. Some good souls also prefer not to go quite away but take up their abode in the great trees, there to await rebirth,

though in certain localities, as already mentioned, other customs prevail.

For instance, according to the account of Mr. Martin Yellow of Bakana, settled for some years at Omo Ala, a town in the south-eastern portion of the district, a different belief obtains in that region. There, as previously related, as in some other Ibo towns, nearly every compound has its sacred tree, generally a giant specimen of Okpa-Kala (oil bean). When a good man dies his soul is gathered into the branches of the family tree, there to dwell amid kindred shades until the time for reincarnation comes round. Ill-doers, on the contrary, are refused admittance to such peaceful refuges, but are driven forth to enter into crocodile, serpent, bush-cat or other evil shape.

By a seeming contradiction, however, some spotless souls are thought to enter certain animal forms, such as cow, elephant or leopard. No shame attaches to this fate ; only on reincarnation the flesh of the particular species of animal is tabu, throughout the next term of earth life, to the man whose spirit wandered, between worlds, in this guise.

The Oratta Ibo of Owerri District are said never to eat rock-dassie or cow, because the souls of many of their people are thought to go into these forms at death. Among all three of the last-mentioned peoples, too, the spirits of evil-doers can enter the bodies of Ogbando (big apes), ' which seize upon wayfarers at night-time and flog them too much ! '

According to Amuneke of Owerri : ' In our country only the ghost of a murdered man or one killed by witchcraft goes up into a big tree. There, in the branches, the spirits stay wailing and crying until those who caused their death have been brought to justice.

' Sometimes in middle night we hear cries from these trees like those of a piccan about four days old or the small peep-peep of a young chicken. Then we know that a ghost is calling for help against his slayer. People who die for themselves, by God's will, never make noise but go quietly out and enter into animal form.

' There is a beast called Edi-Abale (night antelope), a small bush-deer, which must never be killed or eaten, because

good men's souls enter this shape at death. These animals have no fear and often come inside our houses, because they know that no black man will hurt them. Suppose a white man should come, he would not know the old law and so might try to shoot them ; but the beasts do not think of this and are quite unafraid.

' Animals in which the soul of a dead man dwells cannot be killed by ordinary hunters. Always they flee away too swiftly to be harmed. Only they fear white men's rifles ; for guns such as these are beyond our jujus.'

At Obite, in Ahoada District, we came across a variation in belief concerning the local ' ghost tree.' This is called Okkpo and forms the chief juju of the country-side. It is the trunk of an ancient forest giant, branchless and almost dead, but veiled from head to foot by trails of sweet white orchids, epiphytic ferns and leafless, transparent-berried mistletoe. Into this tree the souls of all the *wealthy* dead of the town are drawn at the moment of dissolution, there to await rebirth. ' The bodies of poor men and those bad too much [*i.e.* murderers and wizards] are flung away into the bad bush, and such souls can never enter the tree. Indeed, we do not know where they go.'

Not only do the wraiths of all the respectable dead of Obite find refuge in the mysterious tree, but, according to the testimony of the head chief, confirmed by over a hundred of his people who had gathered to listen, one of the dual spirits of each of the townsfolk clings round the tree, ' while the other walks about in his living body, even going on far journeys.' Chief Onye Onwu, who supplied most of the above information, added :

' Chuku in heaven and Ale here below are our chief gods. Next to them comes Okkpo, the home of our souls both in life and death. There is neither god nor juju to compare in importance to these.'

To return to those new-dead wraiths who seek to rejoin lost friends in the ghost realm :

' The ferrier of souls,' according to Mr. A. C. Braide of Bakana, ' is an old, old woman. Her real name is Ase Sei-Ba (" the Crosser-over "). She paddles a very small

canoe and must be paid whatever was placed in the hand of the corpse for this purpose, or some of the cloth laid over him, or even part of the food set by his side. If the dead man had proved harsh and cruel to others in his life, she will not let him enter her boat for a very long time, and may capsize him in mid-stream, or give him trouble in other ways before permitting him to land in the spirit world. In the end, however, she usually sets him safely ashore. Only those who are bad too much can never pass over.'

On arrival in the sky realm, however, the ghost of a chief cannot join those wraiths of equal rank in the place of the elect—Ala Nduen Ama—until the *second* ceremony has been performed. Pending this he may stay with the shades of ordinary people in Ghost Town, Nduen Ama [Ibo, Ale Maw or Ale Umo Maw]. There his soul is summoned before Chi to give an account of its earth life and lay before the Supreme Deity prayers as to future existence. For instance, a poor man will probably plead for riches in his next incarnation, and one who has been sickly or deformed for strength or beauty of body. Mr. Braide distinctly stated that both Ibo and Kalabari believe in Karma and say that rewards or punishment will follow in the next earth life.

Should the ghost of a chief be forced to tarry long among the lesser wraiths on account of delay in the carrying out of the second ceremony, he grows vexed and weary, so usually sends illness or poverty upon his descendants in order to induce them to remedy this neglect. As expressed by Mr. A. C. Braide : ' A chief is always eager to go to the chiefs' place. It looks common for him to stay with his poorer relations in Nduen Ama. Besides, all who have passed on to the Big Man's town laugh at such an one ! '

So soon as these rites are finished, the ghost sets forth for Ala Nduen Ama and there seeks out the compound of his family. If no shrine has yet been built on earth for his ' image,' however, the ancestral shades will not receive the new-comer and he can have no house of his own in the chiefs' town, so must take his place after all amid wraiths of little account.

' All ghosts are twice as tall as in life and very thin, with

sunken eyes. They have night and day like us, and live much as we do, holding plays in which only those may join who were members of the society on earth. The spirits of sacrificed animals go to the ghost realm, but those who died ordinary deaths cannot do so because they have no souls. Juju trees and plants grow there in plenty, as do fruits and vegetables offered to the dead, such as palm-clusters, yams and plantains. The new souls that have never yet been born are also waiting in the spirit world, and the ghosts can see and talk to them.'

If a man dies in a far-away land, his soul cannot return to his country until called back by a native doctor. The ceremony by which this is brought about is called Teme Fengoma Bo (' spirit call bring ').

In some cases the ghosts of famous warriors are supposed to appear to medicine-men and announce that they have now ' become juju.' An instance is related of the Kalabari chief Opu Egbeka, whose spirit is said to have announced to a priest that, whenever man, elephant or leopard was killed by one of this nation, sacrifices must be made to his shade.[1] Okpolodo also was a famous fighter. After his death a native doctor gave out that the wraith had appeared to him and ordered a shrine to be built by the sacred pool, before which ceremonies must be performed at stated times, when the ghost of the famous warrior would come down and enter therein, listening to the prayers of his people and protecting them. That is the reason the little hut was built near the sacred water at Buguma.

The spirits of the great Okrikan juju Fene-Be-So and the ancestress Tumuniaro were also stated by Chief Sampson Adoki to be those of deified forefathers. So also, it was said, were the figures of Njokku, seated at the summit of his sky ladder, and of Mbafor, mounting guard by the gate, in the Mbari house at Omo Dim in Owerri District.

It is a matter of general belief that Ibo see ghosts more often than Kalabari. A magical means for obtaining clairvoyance was thus described by Mr. A. C. Braide :

Men who can afford to pay from 2,000 to 8,000 manillas

[1] See Peri ceremony, p. 302.

to a native doctor go with the magician into the ' bad bush,' where the corpses of evil-doers and those struck down by infectious disease are thrown. There a long grave is dug and in it those who wish for the power to see spirits must lie down. For each a fowl, dog and tortoise are killed, and the blood, mixed with alligator peppers, is smeared round the eyes of all. By the side of every man sits a beautiful woman, singing the songs he loves best and in her hand holding a bowl of his favourite food. This is done lest, while the soul is wandering in the spirit world, he might see some beautiful ghost and, desiring her too much, never come back again to earth.

On either side, above the breasts and in the middle of each man's body, a razor cut is made, together with one from shoulder to wrist on both arms, on the two great toes and both shoulder blades. Medicine is rubbed into all of these.

For about four or five hours the men lie without moving. At the end of this time the doctor shouts suddenly and, as soon as one of them answers, he is pulled up from the grave. When all have been withdrawn, yellow-wood dye is painted round both eyes and they are placed in a row and bidden to look at the sun. If they see a ghost passing across, they know that the charm has worked ; hidden things are now made plain to them. Should they be unable to see the spirits, however, they must undergo the whole ceremony again. Afterwards they give a certain play, and only those who can see ghosts may drink with them.

Kalabari also have a similar ceremony which they call Toro Tolapu (' face clearing ').

In many places luminous forms or faces are said to rise at nightfall or float over sacred swamp and pool, while everywhere bush and creek is peopled by a multitude of spirits, gentle or terrible, which may become visible at any moment to passers-by, but are specially near and powerful at noon of day or night. For this reason little Kalabari children are warned never to stir abroad when the sun rides high in the heavens, and specially not to throw stick or stone at such a time, lest by so doing they might strike a ghost and therefore rouse its ire, in which case sickness and even death might

follow. It is from a like fear of exposure to evil influences that, among Ibo, juju priests are never permitted to travel at night. A pregnant woman also never leaves the house after sunset ' lest an ill thing might meet her and destroy the babe in her womb.'

Speaking of the danger of darkness, Amuneke of Umo-Yechi, Owerri, said :

' No one likes to walk at night-time when the bad darkness falls, because then all ill things come out. Often, through the dark, one hears sounds as of the crying of piccans, while ghosts and evil shapes such as apes come out and are strong. Abale-Uchiche is the name of the bad big ghost who brings night. He has great wings stretching across the sky and flies like a bird. Sometimes about midnight this dreadful thing draws near to earth. If a man sees it, something bad will happen to him. Either he himself or a relative will soon die. Sometimes the darkness is so thick that nothing at all can be seen ; you can only hear the beating of wings. Then the spirit is indeed out for a very bad purpose. Sometimes a light shines from its head, like that of the stone called diamond. It flies swift, swift past the flight of all birds.'

As already mentioned, the wraiths of Kalabari near unto death may be met in certain sacred spots and questioned by relatives seeking to learn means by which to revive the sufferers, or at least the names of those wizards who are causing their destruction. Sick people, too, can see and talk to the spirits of dead parents or dear, dead wives, and sometimes, like Ibibio, these gentle shades will tell them what sacrifices to make or medicine to take in order to get well.

As among Ibibio, a woman who dies in childbirth is thought to become an evil ghost. The Ibo name for such wraiths and all evil spirits is Ekwensu.

When an owl is heard to cry at night-time round a compound, the people draw close together in the comforting circle of firelight and whisper that it is the evil ghost of a mother deprived of offspring, hovering round to seek whom of those blessed with piccans she may harm. Especially are such malignant visitants enraged against pregnant women.

Should a man have killed another by witchcraft without

being found out, it is thought that the spirit of the victim will never rest until vengeance has been wreaked upon his enemy. When, therefore, a death is followed by misfortunes falling upon the house of a man known to have been inimical to the deceased, or if night birds are heard to cry round the compound of such an one, this is regarded as ground for suspicion that the death was brought about by foul means.

Among northern peoples sheep are perhaps the homeliest and least terrifying of animals. With Kalabari, however, they are capable of taking on a distinctly sinister aspect. Not only does any part of such a beast when added to a 'medicine' render the concoction suspect, as compounded with a view to bewitching the patient, but there is an old tradition that they can assume the shapes of human beings at night-time, 'though, as soon as a man draws near, the creatures are said to resume their ordinary form.'

Perhaps it is not wonderful when one considers how large a part canoes play in the lives of water-side peoples that all such craft are thought to have souls living in the bow. Kalabari chiefs used to consult with the canoe spirit before setting forth on any venture. For an ordinary dug-out, on such occasions, a chicken was sufficient sacrifice, but for a war canoe nothing less than a bottle of rum must be poured over the bow before starting. Should a new boat, by some misfortune such as failure to offer the proper sacrifices, or carry out the necessary protective rites during building, be inhabited by a mischievous or malignant spirit, this will never rest until it has overturned and drowned those aboard. It is best, therefore, before setting out on any enterprise in a new and untried craft, to consult a medicine-man of repute in order to find out whether the indwelling spirit is of good or bad character. Should judgment be given against it, either the boat is at once broken up or, if so fine that the owners are loth to destroy it, it may be used more or less as a show piece, but never for important ventures or distant journeys.

According to Mrs. Martha Amakiri Yellow's account :

'In the month of September, when floods come down the Egenni River, big logs and sometimes whole trees are borne

on the water with birds perched along them like paddlers in a canoe. This is thought to be the spirit of a chief's gig-canoe passing by, and people always warn small boys neither to look at nor talk about such things.'

Great drums, too, such as those Ikuru to which human victims were formerly sacrificed, are thought to possess souls, which, like canoe spirits, perish or go away when their local habitation is destroyed.

As among Ibibio, it was considered necessary to take great care when buying a slave that the purchase should be *bona fide* flesh and blood, not merely a ghost drawn from the grave for some magician's profit. So real was this danger considered that the Aro Chuku juju found it expedient to make a law on the matter : ' Never buy a dumb slave,' the oracle announced, ' because such an one is probably a ghost.' These spirits cannot eat with human beings, nor, indeed, partake of ordinary food, but only of such as has been thrown out in offering to ghost or juju.

Fig. 16.—This headdress represents the increase of the Sky people. Obukele secret society, Abuan.

CHAPTER XXII

Tribal Organisation, Industries, etc.

The sub-tribes such as Ikwerri, Etche, Ekkpahia, Okoba and Abaw, which form part of the great Ibo tribe settled in this region, are themselves subdivided into clans and these yet further into sub-clans and family groups. To take the Ikwerri as an example. This sub-tribe is divided into the Aloa, Ndelle, Okkpaw, Isokpo and many another Ele (clan), each composed of various sub-clans or septs. The Aloa Ele, for instance, is again separated up into five quarters inhabited by the sub-clans of Ommu-Ada, Ommu-Ike, Ibo, Mbodaw and Ommu-Oku. These are often some miles from one another, but are sometimes so near together that they form, to European eyes, a single town. Each ' quarter,' as a rule, is inhabited by the descendants of a common ancestor, often indicated by the prefix Ommu (' children ') [1]—*e.g.* Ommu-Ada, the descendants of Ada. The sub-clans are yet further split up into family groups, and these again into ' extended ' families, which may be taken here as the social unit.

There are no exact Ibo equivalents for the English terms tribe, clan, sept, town, village or hamlet. The word Mbu equally applies to a ' quarter ' consisting of several thousand inhabitants, to one of the lesser ' quarters ' therein contained, or to a single compound ; though the two latter are usually termed Nta (' small ') Mbu. Isoba, for instance, though a town of considerable size, is only one of the nine Mbu forming the Okkpaw Ele, but itself contains many of the large Nta Mbu, each composed of several compounds.

As a general rule, Ikwerri Ibo employ the words Ale (' land ') or Onhia (' country ') when speaking of a large

[1] Or Omu, Omo, Umu, Umaw, or Umo.

AN IKWERRI IBO VILLAGE, SHOWING THE OBIRI.

A KWALE IBO VILLAGE, SHOWING JUJU SHRINES AND CHARMS.

facing p. 272.

The walls of the low, rectangular Ibo houses are usually ornamented either by means of patterns cut out from the soft clay ; by a multitude of gay-coloured plates, diversified by the square bottoms or rounded tops of dark green bottle glass, fixed into the surface, as is most general among the Isokpo ; or by intricate designs made with cowries, or of fine mosaic formed from fragments of white pottery, as is usual among Okkpaw towns. This last forms a particularly beautiful colour scheme on old houses, when the yellow walls are partly coated with a film of sun-kissed moss, vivid green in tone, from which the white pattern stands out with striking clearness and effect.

The mural decoration, as well as the mudding of the walls, is done by the women ; while the men raise the framework, make the roof and provide the doors. These latter are cut from out a section of tree-trunk, and are often elaborately carved. The Sobo of Osua Konike on the Niger also affect carved doors, but these are usually made, not in one piece as among Ibo (see plate facing p. 26), but in three longitudinal planks joined by bronze or iron clamps. About the middle of the central panel a handle protrudes, not fastened on as with Ibo, but cut from the solid.

Men are also responsible for the carved chests, mirror-frames and stools still to be found in many houses, though few native seats, save of rough workmanship and simple design, are manufactured at the present day, owing to the growing desire for folding chairs of European make. Formerly every Ibo chief possessed a considerable number of native stools, varying in design and often intricately carved. The best examples of these are rapidly disappearing ; first, because, for reasons given above, the manufacture of all save the simpler sorts fell into disuse with the exception of those intended for juju purposes, and later the wave of iconoclasm, which swept over the country towards the end of 1915, reduced all but a small remnant to ashes. Fortunately, a fair number had previously been secured for the ethnological collection started immediately on our arrival.

Much the same remarks apply to the pottery, exclusively the women's province. Even during our stay a noticeable

IKWERRI IBO MURAL DECORATIONS—EXTERIOR.

INTERIOR, SHOWING CHI SHRINE.
(See p. 21.)

difference has sprung up. On our coming early in 1914 it was still possible to buy jars and bowls of graceful shape, often many-mouthed and elaborately ornamented, in nearly every market-place. During the last months (late in 1916) the manufacture of any save those of the coarsest and simplest type seems to have stopped. Here again the oldest and most beautiful specimens had, in most cases, been set apart for juju purposes. Such pots are termed Idu Abara. We had, happily, succeeded in getting together a fair number of representative examples before the rest were reduced to a mass of broken sherds in the general cataclysm.

The artistic effort of Ibo people, however, found its most remarkable expression in the so-called Mbari houses, viz. shrines erected in honour of one or other of the principal deities. Beneath the high-peaked roof of these buildings might be seen groups modelled to illustrate each phase of what may be called the Ibo 'Comédie humaine'—from cradle to grave and even before and beyond. The subject has been treated in a separate monograph.[1] Here it is only necessary to mention the skilled modelling displayed in certain figures, combined with *naïveté* which brings to mind now archaic Greek, now early Italian art, with here and there, perhaps, a touch of Byzantium.

Beneath overhanging eaves strange monsters, the like of which were never seen on land or sea, alternate with life-like reproductions of denizens of air and earth in every stage of development, from procreation till the final laying to rest in the arms of the Earth Mother. Allowing for the limitations of material—clay superimposed upon a rough framework of sticks—the life-like expression and pose of many of the figures is little short of marvellous. For example, the impish joy displayed by those shown in the photograph; the shy, self-conscious air of the small orphan (Mgbe) who sits in the Otaminni shrine at Opioro with plump crossed legs and obviously twiddling toes, pulling the ends of her queer-shaped cap, a demure eye fixed all the while upon the modeller; the ram's head at Okpala, which might almost have served as the clay model for an old Greek bronze; the

[1] *Some Nigerian Fertility Cults.*

glee of a monkey over its corn-cob at the Thunderer's shrine at Obite ; mother birds brooding over nests, twig-built and filled with speckled eggs, carefully studied from those of the species it was sought to depict—all showed the germ of artistic life, undeveloped but with far-reaching possibilities if left to grow unhindered, or should the right influence be forthcoming.

Now all lie in ruins, beaten down by followers of the iconoclastic movement, and, even should new Mbari be raised, it is improbable, having regard to the Ibo temperament, that, once destroyed, the same care and faithfulness of modelling will ever again be expended. It is, therefore, fortunate that a large number of photographs and sketches was taken of these buildings. It is doubtful whether the skill in modelling shown by Ibo of this Division is parallelled by any other, apart from the Bini brass and ivory work.

That Kalabari also have an eye to the salient points of objects sought to be depicted, is shown perhaps most clearly by the designs of their old war banners. These are formed of a cloth background, dark or light in tone as the case may be, upon which the design is appliquéd in contrasting colour. A single example will suffice to illustrate the curious skill displayed—that is, the war flag of the John Bull family, Buguma. This is formed of a pale yellow cloth upon which fishes disport themselves, arranged in a neat group, round the roots of a mangrove tree—all in dark blue. This tree has only a few leaves, but so clearly are its arched roots and distinctive characters depicted that no one could be in doubt, even for a moment, as to the growth which it was intended to represent. (See Fig. 21, p. 335.)

The Okrikan town Ogu is a centre of pottery-making for this people, especially of juju jars (Oru Bele) varying in size from a few inches to three and four feet. Some of a new type, which for Okrikans take the place of the Kalabari Nduen Fobara, were first seen upon an ancestor's shrine in the house of a particularly cross-grained old woman, who forbade them to be touched or, at first, even sketched, lest by so doing the shade might be harmed or possibly driven away.

SALT-MAKING. KALABARI.

AN OKRIKAN POTTER.

facing p. 276.

The townsfolk crowded in and bade us not to mind the continued grumbling of our hostess, since she was most peevish and always bad tempered with everyone. One of the bystanders said soothingly that she would lead us to the maker of these fine things.

This she did, along streets hardly a yard wide between low house-walls, blank for the most part, but opening out here and there into little courts, in nearly every one of which some woman potter sat moulding the black clay of the mangrove swamps full of fibre. None of these pots was of particular interest ; all were oval or round in shape and intended for use as plain water jars.

On and on led our guide, through a regular rabbit warren, the narrow streets running into one another round the sharpest of corners, till at last we reached the river again on the other side of the town. Here, in a broader road, we found the woman we sought, a charming old crone, Ba by name, who brought out jar after jar, each more interesting than the last, till a representative series had been obtained.

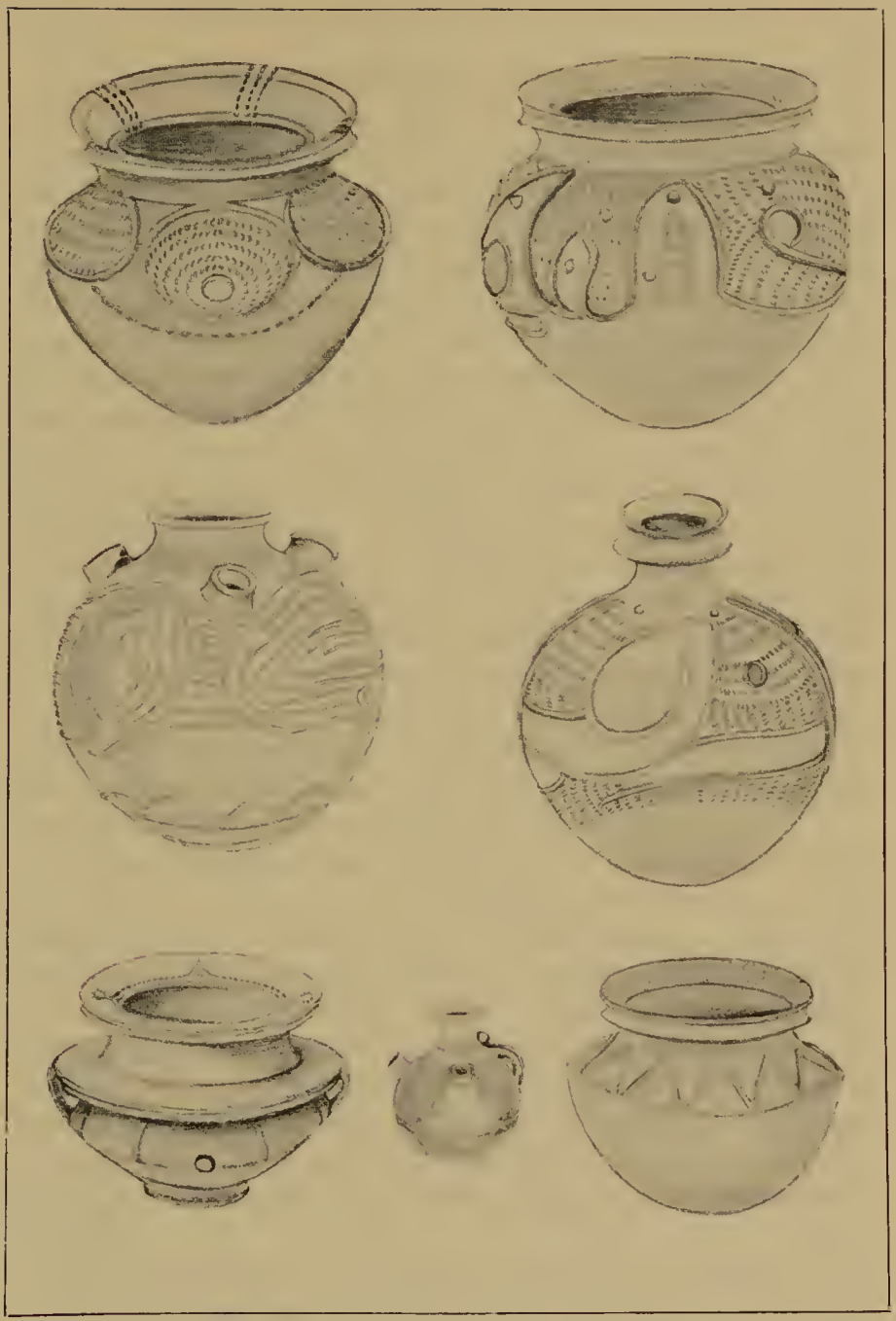
From a native point of view the most important Ibo craft is that of the blacksmith. This guild is very ancient and, until late years, its secrets were most carefully guarded. Even now, a smith seldom takes an apprentice save from among those of his own family. The fame of Ibo iron workers has travelled far, and they themselves wander in pursuit of their calling from the Niger to the Cameroons. The principal articles manufactured are objects of general utility, such as hoes, knives, spear-heads, bolts, hinges and staples, though a certain amount of ornamental work is undertaken for purposes of juju and magic, or for feminine adornment as, for example, girdles, hair-combs, bracelets and anklets. None, however, show special artistic ability. The most ambitious work is expended on the wand-like rattles, surmounted by crude animal figures in the shape of cow, snake or bird. These are used by juju priests at the funerals of ' big ' men and by chiefs' messengers to show their authority. They are called Igilla by Kalabari, Egele by Ikwerri Ibo, and Ogenni or Obodu by Onitsha Ibo.

Basket-making shows considerable skill, both in variety of pattern and form. The baskets vary in size from those used for fish-drying by coastal and river-side peoples, such as the Kalabari and Okrikans, which are large enough to serve as hiding-places for children during enemy raids, to the tiny receptacles, sometimes built in three tiers, found at Ishukwa on the Niger. Perhaps Etche Ibo especially excel in this branch of work.

Only two kinds of cloth are woven by natives of this region : First, that now called Akwete, but formerly termed Akwa-Miri (' cloth of the water '), because it was originally said to have been made for use as a towel when bathing, but has gained in elaborateness of pattern year by year and is now worn for occasions of ceremony. The people of Ngwo, to the north of the Etche, are said to have been the first to weave this from their own cotton ; but later, the traders of Akwete, on the Imo, imitated its manufacture, enlarged the size and elaborated its colours and designs. The latter vary from simple geometrical patterns, woven in dark or bright coloured threads upon white, to conventionalised figures of men and animals wrought with gay-tinted threads upon a dark background. Unfortunately, European cotton is now often used, as is also the case with many dyes, which run in the wash, whereas pieces woven thirty years ago from native products are as fresh to-day as when they came from the loom.

The second kind of locally made cloth is that called by Ibo Okara and by Kalabari Okuru. This is woven entirely of palm fibre or of cotton and palm. The most important occasions on which this cloth is worn have already been given. Ibo also make caps from coco-yam leaf fibre.

Other native cotton cloths in general use here, but introduced by strangers, especially Hausas, are (1) Ekaki, a narrow, striped cloth, with small, brightly coloured squares appliquéd upon it ; (2) Onuga, indigo-dyed narrow strips roughly sewn together ; (3) Egenni Bitte, formed of broader strips in varying shades of blue ; (4) Asisa, a strongly made cloth, usually blue and white, ornamented with an open-work pattern.



TYPES OF POTTERY. TOP FOUR KALABARI AND IBO. BOTTOM ROW IBO.

facing p. 278.

Injiri—the local pronunciation of the word India—a cloth, the trade name of which is 'real India' and which was first introduced to these regions by the Portuguese, was for many years the finest material obtainable and therefore became the dress of Kalabari chiefs and is still worn on ceremonial occasions. It is also often used to screen juju and sacred images. Such pieces of cloth are family heirlooms, and the older they are the more valuable they become. As much as £4 is often paid for one, though, save for their sentimental value, it is difficult to understand why these old cloths should be rated so much more highly than the modern ones, only slightly coarser in texture and of almost identical pattern—a kind of check or plaid—which may be purchased for as many shillings as these cost pounds. Yet, when the property of a late Abonnema chief was being divided out in 1916, the thing which his successor was anxious to obtain above all others was a piece of real India discoloured by age. So soon as this was taken from the box, he stood up and said: 'I should like to have that piece for my share of the house property, because it is the one with which I covered the faces of my ancestors at the Nduen Alali.'

Of Ibo industries and interests, farming is far and away the chief. Practically the whole life and thought of the people centre round the crops. As has been pointed out in another place, the fertility of farm, byre and marriage bed is, to their minds, indissolubly linked; while the Earth Mother, Ale, reigns in no far-off pantheon but holds nearest and dearest place in the lives of her children. The year is counted by farming seasons, divided into ten moons, those during which the ground lies fallow and no farming operations are undertaken being passed over as unworthy of notice.

About January and February the bush is cleared and burned and the new land stumped and dug. This is the work of the men. In March and April seeds and yam tubers are laid in the ground. May and June are seasons of weeding, training the yam vines up the supporting poles and tending the crops generally, which is almost solely the work of women.

The farms (Onru) [1] are usually made beyond the outskirts of the town, often amid thick bush (Igbogo) or on land which has lain fallow for a long time. To this the term Awhia, which properly signifies eleven years' bush, is usually given. Near every compound there is a little enclosure called Ogugwa or Mprata. This is the testing-place for seeds and is planted before any other. When the sample crops are ripe, the people know that the time to start harvesting is at hand.

July is the month of the new corn and first yams ; but the heavier crops fall in during August, September and October. It is indicative of the position of the Earth Goddess that in many places only the head chief of the town can aspire to become her priest (Ibo, Ezala ; Kalabari, Alagbaw). This, although not invariable, is a fairly general rule throughout the Division.

The greatest natural asset of the country consists in its wealth of oil palms, the oil from which not only supplies the people of this region with the necessary food fats, but forms by far the most important article of barter for European goods. Two principal varieties are manufactured, known as hard and soft. The former is made to the north and west of the New Calabar River, and the latter to the east. The difference of manufacture is said to be that for hard oil the nuts are allowed to lie in the bunch till sufficiently decomposed to drop out when touched. For the soft oil they are picked fresh and at once boiled and beaten to a pulp. The latter method produces an oil worth (in 1916) about 30*s*. more per puncheon, and containing a larger proportion of glycerine.

After farming, the most important subsidiary pursuits are fishing in rivers and swamps and trading the farm produce in neighbouring markets. Among Kalabari, however, the converse obtains. There small farms are mostly tended by old-time slaves, and all are by profession either fishermen or traders. In the latter capacity they act as middlemen between European merchants and the Ibo of the interior.

[1] This is the term in most general use, but at Elele the word is Okpa, while at Iba Ubi is used. These all denote a plantation on which farm huts are erected for the use of the workers, who stay a few days at a time.

Wherever a few feet of solid land are found amid the mangrove swamps, fishing huts may be seen. After landing, the catch is at once smoked over bush fires, and the monopoly of dried fish, which is so greatly in demand in the interior that the European supply of stock-fish is only accepted as an inferior substitute, gives them a practical command of the inland marts.

Native salt is made from the leaves, roots and young shoots of the mangrove. This is more valued than that imported from Europe, and its manufacture forms a side industry of some importance. Among the central and eastern Ijaw the salt was often made in large brass pans called Neptunes, and the name of the 'Brass' Ijaw is said to have come from the popularity of these utensils with this people.

In each town of importance throughout southern Ibo country, small markets (Ahia Nta) and big ones (Ahia Iku) are held alternately on every fourth day, with the exception of a few places, such as Ibodo and Elele Alimini, where these follow one another every eighth day, and also in the case of some of the large water-side markets, to prevent the days clashing. Neighbouring towns arrange that these events shall not coincide, and nearly every woman who can be spared from farm work attends one of them almost daily. Such meeting-places provide the young with excellent opportunities for matrimonial introductions and the old with interchange of gossip.

The severity of market rules shows the importance in which these institutions were held. Quarrel or fight entailed a heavy fine, while, should a man chance to be killed as the result of a dispute, the slayer was hanged in the middle of the market-place, usually from the branches of a tree set apart for this purpose. Should a trader refuse to accept a particular kind of manilla agreed upon as local currency, he was sacrificed to the market juju, unless able to provide a substitute. Such an incident took place at Ohambele about twenty-five years ago, and was witnessed by Chief G. A. Yellow. The victim was stretched upon the ground beside a stout stake considerably longer than the body. To

this, feet, waist and upraised hands were firmly bound; then the post with its pitiful burden was driven into the earth beside the market juju, that the victim might be seen by all.

A like penalty was exacted at the opening of a new market, and also if fighting broke out within the market-place between two towns or two compounds. The punishment was imposed for two reasons: first, to appease the 'Spirit of the Market'; and secondly, to announce to neighbouring peoples—for news of such a happening travels far and fast—that the palaver was adjusted and trade in full swing again. Just before Chief Yellow went to Ohambele, fighting had occurred between Nkpo Dabaw and Amopo. The matter was soon settled and he was present when the sacrifice was made. This time a woman was provided by the two offending compounds and bound in the manner above described. For three days she wept and cried aloud, but on the fourth the piteous voice died away and the body hung limp in its bonds. Mr. Yellow added naïvely that such an event always brought much custom to the market-place.

A toll of one manilla was levied by those who cleaned the market roads on all who used them. The adventure was not without peril. Often the women of a distant town would hire a guard of young men to escort them, as enemies sometimes lay in wait and seized trader women on the way home. A striking instance of such practices happened about twenty years ago, when the men of Mbolli carried off all the women of Okrika who had come to their market and slew them, with the exception of one who escaped to her people to tell the tale of torture and mutilation which had befallen the rest. This so roused the fury of the Okrikans that they rose as one man, fell upon the Mbolli and practically enslaved the whole people.

There was a strict rule against smoking in the market, on account of danger from gunpowder, which long remained one of the principal objects of barter and upon which a spark might easily fall. This rule was enforced with special severity at Isokpo.

As regards the origin of the manilla, two stories are current. According to the first, some time before the arrival of the

ABAW NDONNI MARKET AT JUNCTION OF NDONNI CREEK WITH THE NIGER.

facing p. 282.

earliest Portuguese, a party of fishermen hauled up in their drag-nets one or two bronze torques, closely resembling those found in Phoenician and Celtic graves. Subsequent searchings produced others, probably from an ancient wreck. At Ke, half buried in the ground beneath the shrine of the local Ale, we were permitted to see some of these, which were undoubtedly of old workmanship. When the Portuguese came to trade their goods in exchange for slaves and ivory, the torques, which had found great favour with the natives, were shown to the new arrivals, who were requested to send some as samples to Europe in order that copies might be made. A certain number were thus introduced and, owing to the avidity with which these were accepted, smaller objects of much the same shape were imported in ever increasing numbers, until they formed the currency of the coastal regions, and gradually extended inward till they became the main medium of barter from the Niger to the Cross River.

Such is one story. The other says that they were originally made from the metal bolts of ships wrecked upon the shore. A considerable number of Obbaw, the bronze torques of old workmanship, without which no Kalabari chief of any standing could, till yesterday, be buried, and many of which were before the destructive wave of 1915–1916 to be seen in front of the ancestral shrines, to a certain extent bear out the first account.

Perhaps the most likely supposition is that this currency comes down from a remote era and may even have originally been introduced from Egypt, as penannular ring money was used there to a certain extent, or by Phoenician or Carthaginian traders. The Portuguese found their bracelets or manillas (manilloes, manellios, etc.) very favourably received, and began the importation in large quantities.

According to Dapper: 'Along the river of Kalbaria [Kalabari] the white races, especially the Hollanders, trade with the inhabitants, and in exchange for slaves offer rough grey copper armlets, which must be oblong with a rounded curve and very well made, since the natives are very particular on this point and frequently will reject two or three hundred out of one barrel. In exchange for slaves

we often give them red and smooth copper rods (for the rods that are the smoothest are considered the best out there), each weighing a pound and a quarter, and being a yard and a quarter long ; fourteen or fifteen of these are given for a good slave. The natives beat these rods out as long and thin as possible, until they look as smooth as if they had been pulled out. They divide them into three pieces, two of which they twine together, interlacing the third, as if it were a cable formed by twisting together three strands, and from this they proceed to make armlets, large and small, and also necklets. But the armlets brought there by white men, which they call Bochie, are used solely for money.'

The first manillas introduced by a British firm seem to have been those imported by Messrs. King towards the end of the eighteenth century. Originally they were made of copper, or an alloy of copper and iron, and were sold at the rate of £105 per ton for copper, and £22 for iron. During the last few years they have fast fallen out of favour, and to-day (1930) are rarely seen.

The varieties and relative values of manillas in use formerly, or at the present day, are as follows :

Awarawu, were three and are now five to a shilling, the ordinary currency.

Abe, Prince manillas, small but said to be better made and of finer metal.

Amogono Igbiki, *i.e.* Town Money. Two of these are equal to one Abe.

Attorni, twelve to one shilling.

Amakiri Igbiki, twelve to one shilling.

Peri Ekule, out of date, but used at Bonny in olden days at the rate of twelve to one shilling.

Okolosupuruma, twelve to one shilling, now obsolete. Formerly Bile coinage, having a local value equal to one Abe but only worth half an Abe among the Kalabari proper.

Jaja manilla, still in use at Opobo, same value as Attorni.

Okku-kpaw, the manilla of Okku Jumbo of Bonny. No longer used, twelve to one shilling.

In loan transactions extortionate interest is exacted, probably partly due to the large profits made by trading with small capital. Two instances of the excessive rates in vogue may be given as an illustration. In the first,[1] Odum of Obakiri claimed £15 from a fellow-townsman named Ekine, as interest on five cases of palm-kernels, valued at £2, stated to have been lent three years before. In the second,[2] Bibi T. Amakiri claimed from Wariboko B. Manuel the sum of £16, being interest on sixteen shillings borrowed a month before. The plaintiff stated that an interest of two shillings was promised per day on every shilling loan. This arrangement was corroborated by witnesses.

As has been previously stated, Ibo and Kalabari only counted ten months to the year, *i.e.* from about January to October. The other moons which go to form our year were passed over as unworthy of notice, since no farming operations took place while they ruled the sky, and earth lay fallow. Apparently the only exception was among the Egenni, whose year corresponded roughly with our own. Save at Diobu, the eight-day week prevails throughout the region.

Among Kalabari the days are generally named after the markets, while the reverse occurs among Ibo—for instance, the market at Elele is called Eke Ahia (Eke market).

The names of the days of the week among the two nations, with the dates of the principal markets, are as follows :

1. Kalabari. Opu - fe - nne - obu.
   Big - market - day - back (or following).
   Ibo. Eke Iku or Big Eke day.
   This is Big Okkpaw market day.

2. Kalabari. Opu - fe - nne - bene.
   Big - market - day - rest.
   Ibo. Orie Iku or Big Orie day.
   Ewawfe market day. Among Kalabari this corresponded roughly to our Sunday. No one might work, and rum was poured out before the ancestors' shrines.

[1] Case No. 237/15, Isoba Court.
[2] Case No. 852/11, New Calabar Court.

3. Kalabari. Opu-fe-bia(n)-tesoeneba. (Big market reach dawn.)
   Ibo. Afaw Iku. (Big Afaw day.)

4. Kalabari. Opu-fe-tubo-ene (Big market trade day) or Opu-dede-fe-dokku-ene (Big morning market paddling day), or Iru-ene (Drink day).
   Ibo. Nkwaw Iku. (Big Nkwaw day.)
   Aloa small market day.

5. Kalabari. Kala-fe-nne-obu (Small market day back), or Eye bara.
   Ibo. Eke nta. (Small Eke day.)
   Isokpo small market day.

6. Kalabari. Kala-fe-nne-bene. (Small market day rest.)
   Ibo. Orie nta. (Small Orie day.)
   Okkpaw small market day.

7. Kalabari. Kala-fe-bia(n)-tesoeneba or Kala-dede-fe-dokku-ene.
   Ibo. Afaw nta.
   Aloa market day.

8. Kalabari. Opu-fe-dokku-ene.
   Ibo. Nkwaw nta.
   Isokpo big market day.

Among the Ikwerri Ibo round Diobu, near Port Harcourt, a five-day week prevails, as among their neighbours the Mbolli, who call the days of the week Obbaw (native Sunday), Ojua, Ocho, Awkaw and Mma.

Ibo reckon the time of day by the sun, Kalabari by sun or tide.

All people hereabouts start counting on the fingers, and sometimes, though not always, continue on the toes. The numbers are built up on units of four and three. A large, indefinite number, comparable with the old Roman Sexcenti, is the Kalabari Kenni Nde (400) and the Ibo Ulannu (8,000). A typical instance of the use of the latter expression occurred in a case heard at Omokoroshi Court, in which the plaintiff, Yewe Mere, stated on oath :

'About 8,000 years ago this woman was married to my brother Akwamati. About seven years ago [the said]

brother died and it was arranged by the townspeople that I should marry her. Hence she became my wife.'

When one Kalabari meets another on the road, the usual salutation is to call acquaintances by name and address, strangers by the word 'Ikiagbaw' ('friend'). On meeting a big chief the proper expression is 'Kenni-Yanagbaw' ('everybody master,' *i.e.* 'master of all'). Ibo, in like case, say 'Mnam' ('my father or master') or 'Mnem' ('my mother or mistress'). Their ordinary greeting is the charmingly expressed wish 'I'-baw-la,' *i.e.* 'May you have a clear dawn!' or, more freely translated, 'May your life be spared till a good morrow!' Another very usual salutation is 'Gi-Dendo' ('You live'). The northern Ibo 'Ndeawo,' or 'Ndeweo,' is, however, gradually superseding all others.

Frequent phrases in use among Kalabari are 'So-Bere-Okuma' ('Sky blessing what is going to be done'), 'Heaven help me,' or 'God willing,' and 'So-Doko-Bia' ('Sky agree not'), 'Heaven forbid!'

Fig. 17.—Sacred Stool used by Chief Wigwe of Aloa when making offerings and prayers to Chinike. (See p. 239.)

Fig. 18.

Fig. 19.

Sacred Double Stools. (See p. 239.)

CHAPTER XXIII

Government, Slavery, etc.

In olden days the Ibo tribe, which numbers over 4,000,000 souls, consisted for the most part of many loosely linked peoples and towns, few of which ever rose to prominence, with the exception of the Aro, who appear to have originated in what is now known as Aro Chuku District on the western bank of the Cross River. These formed the main priestly and ruling caste. In speaking of them, Chief Gabriel Yellow said :

'Before the coming of Europeans, we always looked upon Aro as white-man-like, because from the beginning they were more brainy and cultured ; wiser of speech and moving their bodies more politely. For this reason we obeyed them as Government.'

It is interesting to note that our greatest Africanist, Sir Harry Johnston, considered that Aro show a Caucasian strain. Those of pure race have certainly a refinement of feature, lightness of tint and independence of bearing which singles them out from others. There was almost certainly some mixture of Portuguese—and possibly, in far earlier times, of Carthaginian—blood.

They still hold aloof, to a considerable extent, from surrounding tribes and show anxiety to guard their women from marriage with men of alien race.

Owing to a faculty for organisation unusual in this part of the world, they were able to spread far and wide the influence of their dominant cult, the so-called Long Juju, until its central shrine, in a ravine near Aro Chuku, became famed as the dwelling-place of the greatest manifestation upon earth of Chi-Uku, the supreme Creatrix. To this oracle all disputes were brought, and against decisions there

given no appeal was possible. The losing party in a suit was usually either put to death or sold into far-off slavery.

One great reason for pilgrimage to this shrine was, as previously stated, the widespread belief that the spirits of the dead were there most accessible. It is indicative of the fame of this juju that even far-off potentates were in the habit of submitting important matters to its decision.

The theocratic administration of the whole region was so organised that an Aro compound, or quarter, was established in most Ibo towns of any size. These settlers acted as agents and were kept in constant touch with the central authority. They also ministered to the greatest of all sources of Aro wealth, namely, the carrying on of the slave trade. The whole country was covered with a network of routes along which the unfortunate captives were passed from depôt to depôt, until finally sold to a tribe so distant that there was little chance of escape. Although the power of this people was much curtailed by the expedition of 1902–1903, they still possess considerable prestige.

The towns of Ozozo and Omonoha also rose to great prominence through possession of the shrines of Amade Onhia and Igwe respectively. Each of these was famous for its oracles.

The power of an Ibo head chief did not greatly exceed that of the other principal men of the place, since the town was ruled by its Nde Awha, or council of elders, to which every inhabitant had a right of appeal. As already mentioned, in most towns—wherever, in fact, Ale was the dominant juju—her priest held the office of head chief with the title Ezale or Ezala, *i.e.* Eze Ale (the chief of Ale).

At the coming of Government perhaps the most important Ibo chiefs in this region were the Ezale of Alimini, Me-Ngwa by name, Ajubike of Obodo and Odo of Elele, whose sway extended over neighbouring towns.

Both among Ibo and Kalabari, a chief was usually succeeded by the brother next in age born of the same father ; though, should he have a powerful grown-up son, the latter might inherit. One-third of a man's property was

usually given to his children and the rest divided among his brethren, the greater share going to the eldest.

The social organisation of the Kalabari differs considerably from that of Ibo. The headship of the first-named people is vested in the Amakiri house, represented at the present day by Chief Charley King Amakiri (Kienni) of Buguma, while Daniel Kalio is dominant chief of the Okrikans.

'Formerly,' Chief Obenibo stated, 'there was also a priest-king, the head of the juju Awome-Ka-So, besides the civil king provided by the Amakiri family. The name of the last priest of Awome-Ka-So at Old Shipping was So-Alagbaw ['Sky chief'], who was known as king of the town. His juju wife, named Ojo, is still alive at Oba-Ama [Bakana].'

According to Robertson (1858): 'The social position of the juju king is before that of Amakree among his people. The juju king is the head high priest, and holds the same pre-eminence over the monarch as Church does over State in other parts of the world. . . . On public occasions the juju king always walks before Amakree, having an umbrella held over his head by an attendant slave.' Crow (1792) remarks that 'next to the king the priests of Bonny exercise an almost arbitrary power over the people.' The priest-king of the Abuan has been mentioned on p. 28.

Both Kalabari and Okrikans are divided into so-called 'Houses' or families, each with its own head. Practically all the former chiefs have their principal residences, elaborate one- or two-storied buildings, at one of the three towns of Abonnema, Buguma or Bakana, while the latter live at Okrika. The members dwell in scattered fishing or trading settlements, each of which contains representatives from several families, who only acknowledge the authority of their own chief.

When any member of a Kalabari House becomes rich and powerful enough to justify him in aspiring to the position of a chief, a family meeting is held to consider his pretensions. He has first to prove that his means are sufficient to support the dignity of such a post—the principal requisites for which are the possession and power to maintain a war canoe

THE CHIEF OF NKARAHIA, WITH HIS HEAD WIFE. IKWERRI IBO.

MASKED DANCERS AT A JUJU "PLAY." KWALE IBO.

facing p. 290.

of at least thirty-two paddlers, a gig or travelling canoe, and not less than a hundred and forty members in the House, reduced to forty for a chief's son, 'because he also had his father's people behind him.' Should no objection be raised by other chiefs or members, the head of the House gives sanction. At the next general meeting of chiefs, the new branch chief is led forward by the head of his family and the appointment confirmed.

The principal duties of a chief were enumerated in Case No. 177/04 between the Native Court of New Calabar and Bagshaw Yellow of Bakana. In the course of his evidence, Tom Yellow, one of the principal men of the House, stated on oath :

'When late Yellow was dying, he said prisoner should be the head of his House, on probation, for one year. It is four years now and prisoner has done nothing in the House. He was given four and a half puncheons of oil to buy a monument to our father Yellow, but failed to do so. He built no house in the Yellow quarter, made no canoe nor traded for the good of the House. No big house was built, according to custom, for the remembrance of our father.

'He neglected the sick members of the House. He bought no slaves since he was appointed head of the House. He married no woman lawfully, as other heads of Houses do. He neglected the burial of the dead in the House. The Yellow compound was kept dirty,' and he failed to provide in other ways for its sanitation.

A chief was particularly bound to look after all women of his House during childbirth, to help in town work and to supply war boys when necessary. In olden days the big Houses seldom split up into branches, because to do so divided the power of the family.

After death all great chiefs were regarded as demigods. One of the most sacred oaths was that taken upon the names of the forefathers, and one of the principal duties of a chief was to perform the ceremonies for the ancestors on every eighth day. Till quite recent times no chief would be absent from home on that day unless unavoidably detained on war palaver, in which case he always sent a small boy with a

message to his head wife that the usual food and drink offerings should be prepared and offered up by the messenger, who, in this case, was permitted to act as the chief's representative.

The head chief of a town acted as leader in great ceremonial plays such as Peri. He was not permitted, however, to do this until he had twice borne the cost of the ceremony. For this reason Chief Tom West India of Buguma led the Peri play given in 1915, instead of the head chief, Charley King Amakiri. These were the only occasions on which Kalabari chiefs acted as priests.

At such plays chiefs usually hold small elephants' tusks. In olden days they alone were allowed to carry these, to use an umbrella or wear any kind of foot-gear.

Should the sons and brothers of a chief be considered unfit to succeed to the headship, this may be conferred upon a slave who has shown special ability and energy. To quote the words of one of the principal men of Bakana :

' If a chief sees that his sons are useless boys, while one of his slaves is wise past all others in advancing the House, he calls the latter before him and says : " I wish you to become second to me." After this he summons a public meeting and says : " I have something to say concerning my household. This member of mine is a capable man, worthy to sit with us judging the affairs of the town. I therefore appoint him to succeed me in the leadership of my people." '

As explained by Chief David West India of Buguma :

' If a slave did his best to help forward the family, he was often given a chief's daughter in marriage, and could sometimes get more influence in the House than even the free-born.'

So close, indeed, was the tie between master and slave, that a son-less man might not leave his property to a daughter so long as there existed a slave to succeed him, though it might be bequeathed, in such a case, to a daughter's son. Indeed, the yoke of slavery was as light as might be among Kalabari. Not only were the issue of a marriage between a free man and slave woman, or *vice versa*, free, but the children of slave parents born to a House were also

regarded as free, because they themselves had not been bought as slaves.

The custom as to the succession to a slave's property was explained by Chief Charles Douglas in his evidence before Degama Native Court on September 11, 1914:

'According to our custom, when a member who has money dies, if that member has a son or a capable slave who can look after the branch properly, then the property should go to that son or slave. It is the duty of the sub-head to trade with the property and pay a tax to the House-head. If such a member dies, who has no one fit to look after his property and decides to give up all his property to the head of his House, then the head of the House is entitled to claim his property; or if the new sub-head does not look after the branch properly and does not trade well, then the head of the House can take it and hand it over to a more capable person in that same branch.'

Testimony to the power of slaves is contained in the evidence given before the same Court in Case No. 91/15 by Chief Sokari George Amakiri:

'In former days slaves used in many cases to become very rich. Therefore, when such an one became a chief, people never used the word "slave" to him. . . . In olden days, were this done, scurrilous songs would be sung against the evil speaker. A meeting would be held and the guilty man fined heavily. He would be carried round the town while the songs were sung. If it was a woman, they would catch her and shave off the hair from the forehead upward; then dress her in a ridiculous manner and hang corn cobs, instead of coral beads, round her neck. The songs would be sung for three days—never more nor less. Everything would then finish and the songs would never be sung again.'

The Kalabari priest-king, however, could only be one who could prove that he had no taint of slave blood on both sides for at least seven generations. The rules as to the succession to a juju priest's property have been mentioned on p. 90.

A free man could never be enslaved against his will. Only by pledging himself for debt, or putting himself under the protection of a chief in order to escape some deserved penalty,

could he lose his freedom. It is usual to rename persons on enslaving them. For instance, a woman formerly called Waibugwo was bought by a Christian and in consequence renamed ' God Power.'

Bonny was probably the greatest slave mart in West Africa. According to Captain Crow, some 16,000 slaves were exported from this place yearly between 1800 and 1820 ; Captain J. Adams estimated the annual number at 20,000. The vast majority was composed of the Ibo tribe. The cost of a male slave at this time was £25 ; at the end of the seventeenth century, 12 or 13 bars were charged for men, 9 for women, and 6 for a boy or girl.

With Ibo, slaves were less numerous than among Kalabari and appear to have been well treated, save when offered in sacrifice at the great festivals, or as substitutes for their masters and at the funeral ceremonies of chiefs.

House members and slaves were expected to give up a quarter of their time to their owner. On other days ' only wives and small boys too young to look after themselves ' might be called upon for service. Among Kalabari no fixed proportion of time is laid down ; but, when goods are entrusted to a member for trading purposes, a percentage of the profits is always given to him.

Should a member of one House steal the property of another House, the whole family to which the thief belonged was held responsible. For the first one or two thefts no very serious steps were taken against the culprit, who was usually given a beating or tied up for a while ; but, should the misdeeds continue, the head of the family would call his people together and say :

' This man is spoiling our House ! Therefore we will send him away that he may no longer trouble us.' Or again : ' We will mark him that he may be known to all as a bad man.' Thereupon an ear, or some other member of the thief's body, was struck off.

In former days the rules against theft of valuables were very strict, both among Kalabari and Ibo. For instance, should a cannon or iron pot be stolen among the latter, or cannon or canoe from the former, the offence was punished

by death. The head of each House, the Council of the Sakapu Club and sometimes powerful juju men, had the right to inflict lesser sentences ; but grave crimes could only be tried before the elders of the town, Ama-omungi-apu (' town elders people '). The Sakapu Club was the special tribunal for cases of adultery. The final appeal was always to the Aro Chuku juju.

Thieves were generally flogged ; but, if it was not a first offence or the relatives refused to make good the loss, the culprit often had either the whole or part of the ear cut off. As previously stated, all male prisoners of war, wizards and witches were slain. Debtors were, as a rule, sold as slaves.

In olden days the relations of a murdered man used to avenge the death of one of their number. The whole family of the murderer therefore deserted their compound and put themselves under the protection of another House, for fear vengeance might be taken on them. Should the slayer be known, his family usually caught and handed him over to the town to be judged, after which he was taken to the mangrove swamp and beaten to death with clubs. Criminals were, as a rule, thrown into the Okumabokko Creek. In later years the punishment was changed to hanging.

Should a man fall in a family fight and the chiefs be unable to fix the guilt definitely upon anyone, one of the opponents of equal rank was killed by the dead man's House. After this, the matter was regarded as closed. There was no question of further vendetta. Should it prove impossible to fix the responsibility for a murder, the chiefs killed a goat and sprinkled the blood before the shrine of Awome-Ka-So to purify it from blood stain. A man dressed in white baft and hung with beads was brought before the deity and dedicated to her in the following words :

' Mie	i-tomgbaw.	Wa	ori	okubo.	Eper-im
' Behold	your person.	We	him	lead.	Give you [for]
i-tomgbaw	fitebaw.'				
your man	dead.'				

With regard to the killing of a free man by a slave, should the slain man's family be unfriendly to that of the slayer, they

could demand, not the death of the actual murderer, but a man of equal rank to their lost relative. In this case, the slave himself would naturally be severely punished by his owners. No murderer could redeem his life with money, and cases of manslaughter were treated as murder.[1]

If for some reason a murderer was reprieved, he had to 'kill a fowl and put chalk on his right hand and blood, and feathers sticking on the blood, to cleanse him of his sin. When a wizard makes medicine to kill person, he does the same to purge himself of the guilt'—as do all Ibo, who fear that otherwise the ghost of the murdered man will come and drive them mad. The murderer must also shave his head.

With regard to both murder and manslaughter, Ibo custom in this region seems to differ from that recorded by Mr. N. W. Thomas as prevailing amid the Onitsha-Awka sub-tribe studied by him. For instance, he says :

'It was incumbent upon the murderer to hang himself, for if anyone else hanged him it would be murder.'

Here, however, when lawfully condemned, no stain of guilt would attach to the executioners, though the usual procedure was for some chief or juju priest to order the guilty man to hang himself.

The idea of 'a life for a life' is so ingrained among the people of this region that a murderer usually goes straight away and hangs himself without further ado.[2] An instance illustrating native views on the subject came to light not long ago. A man who, according to the trend of the evidence, seemed almost certainly guilty of having killed a fellow-townsman, but against whom there was not quite enough evidence to satisfy the white judge, was given the benefit of the doubt and returned in triumph to his town. The chiefs listened to what he had to say and then one of their number spoke : 'The white man says there is not enough evidence against you. Very well. You, however, know the custom. Go therefore and do as seems best to you.' In a few hours the man was found hanging from a tree.

[1] See p. 199 for further particulars as to punishments for murder, theft and adultery.

[2] Brass murderers are said often to commit suicide by holding their breath.

Again, a little further on, Mr. Thomas states : ' Then the brother took the corpse and lamented, saying : " You will never murder again when you return to this world." ' [1]

Here, on the other hand, no one would touch the body, except to fling it away in the ' bad bush,' since it is regarded as unclean. On p. 86 of his book, too, we read :

' A husband who killed his wife was guilty of murder, but not, according to one statement made to me, a woman who killed her husband.'

Here both man and wife are held equally responsible. To give an instance : At Ohambele, just before the coming of Government, a man flogged his wife for some misdeed. The woman was very angry and clutched at her husband in order to throw him down. In falling his head struck against the edge of an iron pot. Death resulted, and the woman was, therefore, by native law, condemned to die also.

Among all tribes of this region, the body of a man who has met his end by murder or manslaughter is carried to the slayer's house, and the family of the latter must bear the funeral and juju expenses. If a man tries to escape after killing another, the dead man's relatives hold the slayer's family collectively answerable, and a hostage must be supplied till the guilty man can be caught and handed over. Such a case (No. 298/10) is recorded from Omokoroshi as follows :

Wokpara stated on oath :

' About seven years ago one of my house boys killed an Omokoroshi man, so Omokoroshi people sent an Okrikan, by name Nabiobu, to take me in my house and bring to them, if I failed to produce the man who committed the murder. I gave another boy to Nabiobu that they should detain him until I found the murderer. After the latter was found and given to the same Nabiobu, I told him to bring me back my boy. Since then I have not seen Nabiobu, but I saw the boy and told him to return home and he returned.'

Atasia stated on oath :

' I was present when the plaintiff and several others came to defendant and wanted to take him on account of a certain

[1] *Ibo-Speaking Peoples*, Part IV, p. 88.

man murdered. So the defendant's son, the boy in question, followed them instead of his father. When the plaintiff came to the defendant, Nabiobu was also present, and when the murderer was found he was handed to Nabiobu [and the boy should, therefore, have been set free].'

Among Ibo, all cases were judged by the chiefs and elders. An adulterer was usually ordered to pay heavy damages and, if necessary, his goods were sold for this purpose. In Owerri, it is said a husband generally left an unfaithful wife, only demanding back his dowry.

Among the Abuan there was a curious custom by which rich men were appointed as judges. According to Chief Oku of Amalem :

'When a man grew rich enough, he used to go and buy a big coral bead [Ela] to hang round his neck. So soon as the people saw this on him, they looked upon him with great respect and began to bring their cases to him for decision, often offering eight hundred manillas or even more that he might give sentence in their favour. Soon every town had one of these Oyil-ela ; but after a while, when the people saw that these ran them into great expense and were of no real use at all, they decided to abolish the custom, and did so fifteen years ago. Our native word for Oyil-ela is "lawyer."'

The practice of ordeal was common amongst all tribes of this region. With Kalabari, the most usual form was to draw a feather through ear or tongue. One of the priestesses got this feather from a juju shrine. The ear or mouth of the accused was well searched by a native doctor to see if recourse had been had to a protective juju, after which the person stated that he or she had been accused of certain misdeeds and came to clear himself. Then ear or tongue was held out and the feather driven through by the quill. If innocent, it was said to pass clear through ; but if guilty the feather breaks or bends and cannot be pushed through. The priestess or doctor rubs chalk on the foreheads of those who have satisfactorily undergone the ordeal. This is a sign of innocence and no further question may be raised.

Anyone accused of witchcraft or other crime could clear

him, or herself by swimming across the Amisaka Creek near Bakana, holding a white cock in the hand. 'This was done every year before the feast of Ele-Sara, which took place at the time of new yams. Many of those accused during the year were kept till this festival for the ordeal. Ele-Sara is the name of the Adumu who owns this water.' It was, doubtless, this ordeal which was referred to by Adams (*c.* 1790) :

'The sharks in this river are enormously large . . . this voracious fish is the Calabarians' Jew Jew ; and great number of them frequent the creek before the town, where they are regularly fed. A criminal is compelled to swim over the creek, which is a species of ordeal ; and . . . not one in twenty escape.'

Among Ibo of the interior, as among Ibibio and Ekoi, the most usual form of ordeal was that of boiling oil.

Fig. 20.—Ancestral Tablet, Ikwerri Ibo. (See p. 251.)

CHAPTER XXIV

Secret Societies and Clubs

Among Kalabari and Okrikans, before the coming of white men, the power of government was mostly vested in the Sakapu [1] Club, just as in the Ekkpe Society among the Efik of Calabar and the Ngbe of the Ekoi. As with these latter societies, women were not allowed to join the club.[2] None but members could sing the songs or take part in the dances peculiar to the society, or wear any feathers on their heads. The only exception to this law was the right of members of the Peri and Chuku clubs to use the latter adornment, usually plumes of the fish eagle, during the actual performance of their rites.

An example of the power still claimed by the Sakapu Club is given in the sworn statement of John Bob Manuel [3] : ' On the 29th, accused came up to me on return from the court and asked what was the judgment in mine and Dokku's case. I told him. He said : " Who is going to pay the cases of gin for the Sakapu Club ? " I said : " What about it ? " He said : " Any person who beats the drum and invokes juju in the town must pay a case of gin to the Sakapu Club." I said : " Why ? " He said : " We are the governors of the town." . . . Next morning the Sakapu drum beat. I went to the club. I saw the four accused there. Dokku gave them money with which they bought a case of gin. They threw gin on the ground and pronounced certain words, by which they revoked the juju.'

The following letter also shows the rights claimed by them :

[1] Sekki-apu (dancing people), usually contracted into Sakapu or Sekapu.
[2] For an exception see page 71.
[3] Degama Native Court, Case No. 249/14.

CHIEF GABRIEL AMAKIRI YELLOW.

MRS. G. A. YELLOW.

facing p. 300.

'SIR,

We the undersigned Sakapu Club members hereby humbly beg to approach your worship with the attached laws of our club that we wish to play in our town. Your worship will see into it and if it is not necessary? As the year comes, it is better to let you know first go on with what we used to do before: and if you consent with same, we should be glad and thankful if you will sign for us.

We have the hon. to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servants,
Chief Benibo George his × mark,
etc. etc. etc.

Laws of Tombia Sekki-Apu's Club

(1) As soon as drum beat the new joiners to come at once, in default to pay six pence.

(2) When the drum was turned to beat for low point, and anyone fails to appear to pay 1*s*.

(3) A theft, liable to pay 4*s*.

(4) Any members invoke Foropele ['belly caught'] juju against anyone, liable to pay 4*s*.

(5) Anyone who asked the club or members that [who?] are you, liable to pay 4*s*.

(6) Any person who refused to carry message, liable to pay 1*s*.

(7) Any person who were fighting for [with] his brother, liable to pay 1*s*.

(8) Any person who are not one of the Sekki-Apu's club and wear feather in the public, liable to pay 5*s*.

(9) Any person who wear Igbiri [dancing rattles] in the town, liable to pay 5*s*.

(10) Any person who sing Sekki-Apu's song in the town, liable to pay 2*s*.'

At Okrika, according to Chief Sampson Adoki:

'In the old time of Sakapu Club, when a girl was about to perform Iria ceremony, she would go before the Sakapu Club members and report it to them. Then she would

provide drinks for them. She would also go and report it to the Egbele Ereme, the big women of the town, and report same to them next season and also provide them with drinks. This system was altered by the chiefs last year [*i.e.* 1915], and it was arranged that I, who would write out the girl's promise of marriage, should receive five shillings on behalf of the country—the money to be used for the town. This stood for the Sakapu Club drinks, but the Egbele Ereme still receive theirs. This custom applies to all people whether chiefs or boys.'

Next in importance to the Sakapu comes the Peri Club, which none save warriors are allowed to join. Its rites were only celebrated on the three following occasions : (1) before and after war forays ; (2) as the final funeral ceremony for a chief, which may take place any time from eight months to ten years after death, according to the time taken to collect the necessary funds ; and (3) after the slaying of a leopard, elephant or hippopotamus. This was the only occasion on which cannibalism was practised among Kalabari.[1]

On returning from battle the victims, if not already slain, were killed before rounding the point and coming within sight of the shrine of Awome-Ka-So, that at least the letter of her law forbidding the shedding of human blood might be kept. ' At night-time the flesh was brought to the Okpolodo juju house and shared very secretly without letting any young people know. The meat was offered up to the juju and then eaten as a solemn means of renewing the warriors' strength. Except at the ceremony before starting out on war palaver, Peri could not be held without partaking of human, elephant, leopard or hippopotamus flesh. If this is decomposed, the skulls at least must be brought. Everyone who killed an enemy brought the head, boiled it, ate the flesh and was thenceforth a member of Peri. These trophies were afterwards laid on top of the Egbeka, the high stick altar near the juju pond—displayed there to show the valour of the tribe and the number of the slain enemies.'

Chief Gabriel Amakiri Yellow told us how he and his

[1] For details as to the rites carried out among the Okrikans see p. 80 *et seq.*

brother Jonah Don Pedro were initiated into the membership of this club while still babies in arms :

'We were carried to where the victim lay. Somebody closed our hands round the handle of the knife with which we were helped to strike the dead body. Then the head was cut off in our names and we were elected members. I do not remember if some of the flesh was put in our mouths.'

The following information as to the rites was given by Mr. A. C. Braide of Bakana :

'Only chiefs, chiefs' sons or persons specially nominated by them might kill the prisoners offered at this play. After striking off the heads, the executioner had to put his tongue to the blood on his sword and was then obliged to go to his house and stay there for three days. On the fourth he went all round the town, finely robed and with fish-eagle's feathers in his hair. The sword, called Abam-Bogi or Okologie-Bogi, was never used for any other purpose but the killing of defeated enemies. The heads of the victims were carried to the Egbeka and, after other ceremonies had been performed, a flat dish, covered with a fine cloth, was brought to each man who had taken a prisoner. This charger was then placed in the hands of the warrior's eldest sister, who carried home the head and afterwards cooked and ate the flesh, sharing it among the men and old women. The body meat was divided up between the chiefs after being cooked in the house called Okpolodo. Sometimes a man would give part of his share to his wife, who could either eat it or not as she chose ; but, in the case of the head meat, the eldest sister, as head of the women, was compelled to eat part of this whether she liked to or not.[1]

'If many people objected to eating the flesh, it was carried down to the juju pool and there washed, so that all people might be obliged to partake to some extent, since this was the drinking water of the town. Only when such a thing was done, no woman might go and take water for herself, but had to send boys to draw it for her.'

[1] Whenever an antelope, goat, etc., is killed for sacrifice or any other purpose, the eldest sister always has the head meat as her perquisite, and shares it with the other women.

A very great play was given and all the town rejoiced. The men fired guns and held special war plays while the women danced in a separate place. 'Many people acted as though almost mad by reason of the amount of human flesh which they had eaten.'

Among the Brass Ijaw, not only were the skulls of enemies slain in war taken for the Peri ceremony, but all the captives were brought back to the town alive and there slaughtered and eaten. The Egbele Ereme took the heads and, after cooking them, brought them back to the men and shared in the flesh. The bodies were divided among the men.

The only other society of any importance was the Suku Ogbo, or Chuku's Club, composed of men who had visited the sacred shrine at Aro Chuku. On the death of a member, the special drum of the club was beaten and dances were held. Chalk was rubbed on the performers' temples from the outer corner of the eye.

The only woman's society in the region is apparently that of the Egbele Ereme (women historians), which used to be very powerful. According to John Kalio :

'When the Government first came to settle at Okrika it was the woman's society that caused all the trouble. They said : "Fene-Be-So has nothing to do with white men. We will not have white men here." They it was who stirred up the men to prevent the coming of Government. Just lately this society suggested to the chiefs that a costly sacrifice should be made to Fene-Be-So so that they might overcome the Kalabari. The chiefs said : "You would bring our country to ruin." Especially Chief Daniel Kalio was against this advice. It is because of this that they have not so much power any more.'

The various women's 'age classes' at Okrika used to punish their members for wrong-doing. In a case heard in 1915, some women charged with assault stated :

'The prosecutrix stole and we caught her and wished to hold an Owu play over her, treating her as an object of ridicule and leading her about in the town. She belongs to our club Ngu Ogbo ["all who 'tied cloth' at the same time"—sometimes called Posi]. We have a rule that,

when club members commit theft, we are the people to fine them.'

The Ngu Ogbo also existed at Bakana and Tombia, where it comprised both men and women, but has now come to an end, as one of the members explained, ' because we are now big men and have outgrown it.'

Now that the power of the Sakapu Club has been diminished by the coming of Government, various other clubs have been formed, imitating its dances, but without possessing its influence. Perhaps the best known of these is called Egbe Pele Gbaw Sibaw (' play caught person bad '), after one of the Owu. Membership is confined to women and youths. At first it was customary for the former to take boy ' play husbands,' but considerable trouble was caused at Bakana through the jealousy of the real spouses, who considered that matters had been carried too far and punished the women accordingly.

Other clubs lately started by Kalabari, and mostly joined by women and youths, are called by the name of the cloth worn on these occasions—for instance, Njiri Ogbo (real India cloth club) and Akwa Miri (Akwete native cloth). Their plays are held about Christmas-time to the accompaniment of pottery drums. A similar club is called Ononu, from the mouth instruments used in the dances.

The Ibo of the Division form an exception to most peoples in the neighbourhood in that they appear to have no secret societies at all save for the Obukere Club and a somewhat similar institution to the Peri, which held festival after the slaying of human beings, leopard, elephant or hippopotamus.

The Obukere, or Obukele, Club is a semi-secret society, which possesses great power along both sides of the Sombreiro River north of Degama. It was probably introduced by the Kalabari colonies in imitation of their Sakapu society, and the rites paid to the Owu, but has been adapted and modified in various ways by the different peoples among which it has flourished. Generally speaking, the main object of the club is to secure fruitfulness for human beings, animals and fishes. The most usual head-dress of the ' players ' is a highly conventionalised fish. Curious and unnatural rites are said

often to take place at the secret meetings, and sympathetic magic, like that of the Intichiuma of the Northern Australians, to be much practised.

The elaborate storied buildings, upon which the wealth and utmost resources of the inhabitants have been lavished, are the most conspicuous objects in the towns where Obukere is worshipped.

According to the testimony of Chief Oku of Amalem, priest-king of the Abuan, and Chief Amiofori of Otari, secular king :

'Some of our people also join the Obukele Club. This does not cost much, only about two cases of gin. In olden days there were three grades to this society.

(1) Edaba, members of which might stand near the club-house but not enter.
(2) Ogbegum, members of which might go into the club-house, but not into the special part where Obukele dwells.
(3) Araman, members of which wore white eagles' feathers and might draw near to Obukele and see, or join in, the sacred dance.

All these grades were abolished about fifteen years ago, at the same time as the institution called Oyil-ela.'

Among the Abuan, who are great hunters, the ceremonies are chiefly performed with a view to securing fruitfulness amongst the bush animals ; and the presiding spirit, Obukele, is worshipped as a god.

Chief Oku continued : 'There is one big club for our part called Obbum. A man must pay 4,800 manillas to this society before a play will be given for him. When it is time for the celebration, they bring out a great drum made like a bow. This is beaten—"Doom ! Doom !" Horns are blown and all dancers shake the rattles which they wear bound round their ankles. Royal families join this society. A man who has not had this play made for him is never looked upon with much respect. On a member's death the play is always given, when many goats are killed and a great feast lasting for eight days is held.'

HEAD-DRESSES OF THE OBUKELE SECRET SOCIETY.

facing p. 306.

CHAPTER XXV

'Plays'

The most elaborate system of 'plays' in the Degama Division is undoubtedly that practised by Kalabari. The ceremonies follow one another in the order ordained by tradition till the full cycle, lasting roughly for a quarter of a century, has been completed. In olden days the series was often finished within a few years ; but of late the delay due to the various Houses saving up money so as to outdo their rivals in the matter of display has much prolonged the period. The present celebration at Abonnema, for instance, has already lasted twenty-five years and is still not finished.

The following account was put together from information supplied by Chiefs Gabriel Amakiri Yellow and Quaker Bob Manuel after consultation with the leaders of the various plays :

'The first of the series is the Nduen Alali or "play of the dead," given by each family in turn in honour of its ancestors. Each House invites the head chiefs and women of the town and all go into the Opu Wari [big house], out of which opens the Ikpu, where the shrines of the ancestors are kept. Goats, fowls, etc., are then sacrificed by the family and their guests before the Nduen Fobara, and the ancestors are told of the approaching celebration of the plays and asked to come from the spirit land to take their part in them. A feast is then held with singing and dancing. Before this rite takes place, all the old paint is washed off the Nduen Fobara, which are then repainted. While this is being done, a special cloth, usually a piece of real India, is hung across the shrine so as to screen the images from view.

'The rites for the ancestors of the head chief of the town are performed last of all, and on the evening of this day the

members of the Sakapu Club come to the shrine of Amakiri, dancing and beating drums. Next morning they repeat their visit, sacrifice a goat and pour the blood before the Nduen Fobara. Then many people, including all the principal men of the town, go down the New Calabar River in war canoes, racing all the way. They land at Owu Pokku [the beach of the Owu] and there, before an ancient empty shrine, sacrifice a dog and goat, calling upon the Owu to come from their home in the sea and be present at the celebration of their plays.'

Here, for the first time since the conclusion of the last cycle, the Sakapu songs and dances are given ; in which, on this one day, all people, whether members of the club or not, can join. Thence they return to the town, and celebrations are held before the shrine of Awome-Ka-So. Drink is provided for three days, and all the women come singing and wearing pieces of real India cloth.

A week (eight days) after the Owu Pokku ceremony the Sakapu Club, whose members alone are allowed to take part in the performances, give notice to the town that they will start their plays, ' since all the old dead chiefs have now taken their chop and returned to the town to watch the rites, as also the Owu, who have arrived from their home in the sea.' Sacrifice is now made to the three posts, called Ekine, which is the real half-secret name of the society ; and the sacred Ikiriko drum is drawn out of the water of the juju pond, where it has lain since the last celebrations.

A week later, the first Owu play, that of Aki, is given. Aspirants for membership now pay their fees and join the club, but, as new members are forbidden to wear anything but ordinary clothes for the first two years, the plays are not continued until this period has gone by. When all have had time to provide their proper dresses a date is fixed, beyond which they will not wait, and the second play, that of Alagba, is held. Leopards' teeth and skins are much worn.

Each play is performed in honour of a distinct Owu, and is owned by the House to whose member he or she first appeared. The heads of this family thereafter ' run the expenses ' and take the principal parts, representing the

various members of the water spirit's family. The time during which an Owu play is celebrated is called Fengo.

The origin of these performances was said by one of our women informants to be as follows :

'In the old, old days a Karakarama woman named Pirebo-Nengima went out fishing. She saw something playing on a bank. The first day she feared and ran home ; but next day went again to the same place. There she hid herself and waited. After a while mermaids came up out of the water and began to dance up and down upon the sand. The woman watched. After the play was over, the dancers sprang back again into the water, but one of them left behind the head-dress which she had been wearing. The woman crept up, seized it, took it home and showed it to her family. Afterwards she taught them the dance she had seen, and this became the special play of that House. When the Portuguese merchants came, the head-dress was taken to them and they were asked to send it home to be copied. This was done ; so all the head-dresses now worn for this play are copies of the one let fall by the water wife.'

Another version of the story is that the first Owu was found by a woman called Ekine Ba, who before dying had three posts driven into the ground by the juju pond to represent her and bear her name.

Save for the worship of Awome-Ka-So, the belief in these water spirits and the plays or ceremonies held in their honour rank first in importance with the natives of this region, and exert the greatest influence over their lives. At the beginning of each performance the Owu image offers a sacrifice to Awome-Ka-So, as ' they must pay respect to her, when they come to her town.'

The underlying root ideas in the celebrations are, no doubt, first, the desire to appease the powerful water spirits and entreat their help, and, secondly, by sympathetic magic to increase their own offspring on land and the fish in the water, on which their living almost entirely depended, especially before the coming of Europeans.

The following are the names of the Owu in the order in which their respective plays are performed. These are

never interrupted save by the death of a chief, when the particular play being given at the time must be finished with all due rites, but an interval must elapse before the next celebration can be held ; for ' while the town moans for the death of a chief, the Sakapu Club does not play, since this would hurt the feelings of the bereaved family.'

(1) Aki.
(2) Alagba.
(3) Omua.
(4) Otobo (Hippopotamus) ; Otobo-Ba, his wife.
(5) Afuru-Yingi (' Thief Mother '). During this play the performers are allowed to steal anything on which they can lay their hands. The stolen property is taken to the club-house, and can only be regained on payment of one manilla.
(6) Otobo-Diri-Pilama (' Hippopotamus medicine spoil '). All medicines, however powerful, possessed by any person who is ' spied ' by the ' images,' at once lose their efficacy and must be ' renewed.'
(7) Beki-Aro-Sibbi (' white man's ship on head '). This is connected with the Otobo play.

There is an interval of a week between Alagba, Omua, and Otobo plays. Numbers (4) to (7) are always performed at the same time.

The preceding plays are owned by the town in common. The date of the next play, Opongi, depends upon the length of time taken by the Amakiri House at Buguma in collecting money to defray the expenses incurred in its presentation. The same remark applies generally to the succeeding plays.

(8) Opongi and family. Owned by the Amakiri House.
(9) Seki (Crocodile). Given at the same time as the last play. This originated at Ifawkaw.
(10) Okuku and family. Owned by the West India and Black Duke Houses.
(11) Ebbe. Founded at the village of Opuru-Ama.
(12) Otokolo. Owned by the George Will House.
(13) Perigbo.
(14) Abi-Ogbo. Owned by Briggs' House.

(15) Igoni.
(16) Igu. The chief 'image' is impersonated by a member of Braid's House.
(17) Obianama. Owned by the George Will family.
(18) Kurukonji. Owned by the Douglas family.
(19) Peri-Angala ('smart people of the mangrove,' *i.e.* monkeys).

For this play the performers wear monkey skins and imitate the antics of these creatures. It is owned by Jim Braid's House.

(20) Egbelegbe. Owned by the Amakiri House.
(21) Abirimanga. The chief play of Tombia.
(22) Aminji-Diki-Owu. Common to the town.
(23) Egbeleturu. Common to the town.
(24) Tubo-Angala ('the sand-bank they stay').
(25) Ogia.
(26) Igbo. Owned by Don Pedro's House.
(27) Erewori-Owu. In this play abusive words are used against women.
(28) Aingbo. Owned by Briggs' House.
(29) Bugu-Owu. Specially devoted to sacrificial ceremonies.
(30) Ekaki (Tortoise). Held in greatest honour at Kula.
(31) Sibia-Nanglo. Common to the town.
(32) Gbasa. Owned by Harry Braid's House.
(33) Pipiligbo. Owned by Briggs' House.
(34) Ekkpe. This Owu first appeared to a woman of Chief George Amakiri's House at Minama. In former days, during the celebration of this play, the chief 'image' always went into the water.
(35) Imgbila. Owned by Bob Manuel's House.
(36) Owu-Aro-Su ('Let all Owu form themselves as canoe'). The names of some of the chief 'images' are Tarakoko the bow, Offor the helmsman, and Wandoko the captain. 'This play is to show that all Owu will be played again some day.'

'Then two strong Owu, Ejima and Ogbokoroma, are performed. Anyone who passes in front of the latter's 'image' will fall sick and die; his spirit will be taken out of

his body. Many boys take part in this play, but towards the close they hurry home to take off their costumes ; should the image catch them before they have done this, they will die.'

This ends the cycle. The Sakapu members replace the big drum Ikiriko in the sacred pond, and no more Owu plays or songs can be given. The water spirits now go back to Owu Pokku ; thither, too, the chiefs proceed and revoke the first ceremony, by which the Owu were summoned up from the sea. The genii then return to their home in the ocean, called Aku or Owu-Aku-Mu (' the Owu to Aku have gone ').

The head women of the town now go every eighth day to the Opu-Wari of each chief, ' singing and dancing and saying that the ghosts can go back to their homes,' as the cycle of ceremonies is at an end.

After a certain interval, generally a year or more, two plays called Kala-Ise and Minji Asaiya are performed, by day and night respectively. ' These jujus go and walk round and search every corner and drive away all evil spirits whom the Owu have missed.' During the latter celebration a plantain leaf is taken, waved round the people and then thrown into the river—' carrying with it all bad things from the town.' This rite corresponds roughly to the Efik yearly ceremony Tuak Ndokk, but here only occurs once at the end of each cycle or ' jubilee.' Next morning a big dance takes place, circling round the town and finishing up at Great Adumu's house. Seven years later the series starts again with the holding of the Nduen Alali ceremonies in honour of the forefathers.

If, in the course of the performance, a drummer makes a mistake and, for instance, beats the Alagba tune after this particular play is finished, the whole cycle is ' spoilt ' and must start again from the beginning, else some great evil will befall the town. In the old days the plays were never performed out of turn ; the only exception to this rule being that a repetition was allowed to take place on the death of the ' owner ' of an Owu, after due propitiatory ceremonies had been carried out.

Ebbe and Imgbila, however, besides being played in their proper turn, may be performed by boys and non-members whenever the dreaded scourge of smallpox is thought to be nearing the town, though it is strictly forbidden for any member of the Sakapu to take part. On one occasion, in 1910, it is stated, 'Joe Quaker, a noted dancer of the society, broke this rule and joined the boys of the town. Many others followed suit and the play was performed with all due ceremony, despite the warnings of the chiefs, who said: "You must not call the Ebbe and Imgbila Owu to the town, else some bad things will happen." A few minutes later Joe died in the middle of the dance, killed by the Ebbe spirit, who was angry because Sakapu Club members had joined in the play and summoned him [the Owu] back for no purpose.'

When all arrangements for the holding of a play have been made, the drummer first beats out on Ikiriko the drum name of the particular 'owner' or head player, who steps forth robed in the special garb and head-dress of the Owu in question and is then asked on the drum: 'Who is your father?' The 'image' may utter no sound, but at once runs and pays respect to his father or, if the latter be dead, points to his Opu Wari or Nduen Fobara. The name of his mother is next called, and her compound must be immediately indicated; then follows a list of his ancestors, whose respective shrines must be pointed out. The various jujus in the town square are now named, generally in the following order:

(1) Agiaba (an old ancestress).
(2) Okiringa (the spirit of the Harmattan wind).
(3) Egbeka (war juju).
(4) Awome-Ka-So and her priest. The latter hereupon comes out and sits down. The drum name by which he is known is Awta Obojo Taringbe, which means 'whoever eats mud-fish chews the bone only and gets no real taste.' This name is sometimes given to priests of other jujus, but applies particularly to that of Awome-Ka-So.

(5) Egbeka. A variant of (3).
(6) Obiana (an ancestress).
(7) Amakiri.
(8) Oborigbo.
(9) The drum Ikiriko. No priest appears, but the players dance in front of the drum.
(10) Egbeka. The special variety played exclusively among Kalabari.
(11) Suku Tugbaw (Chuku's child). Three varieties.
(12) Buru Pikesi (the yam stick).
(13) Okpolodo. The drum name of this juju is Bara Edenne Bara Bibi ('hands rack hands mouth'), 'because Okpolodo often seizes meat from the rack.' Edenne is the framework of sticks erected over the fire on which meat, fish, etc., is dried. The name refers to the cannibalistic rites always practised during this play (described on p. 302).
(14) Ekine (the esoteric name of the Sakapu Club).

All the jujus have special posts or altars, either permanent or temporary erections, round the juju pond (Sibbe). The drum name of Sibbe is

'Sibbe - ba omungi eregbaw, bilama,
'Well - daughter old woman, put it down,
bilama, du.'
put it down, bring it out.'

If an 'image' does not at once recognise a name when beaten out on the drum, and point to the dwelling-place of the particular spirit mentioned, he is expelled from the club with ignominy, must slaughter a dog in expiation of his fault, and may only be re-admitted on payment of a heavy fine. The same punishment is meted out to any dancer or 'image' who does not take his proper turn. The performers must move from left to right—a law which always applies to the Owu plays in this region.

The dances of the Sakapu Club must 'go down'—*i.e.* cease—when night falls. Before returning to their houses, those who have taken part must wash their feet in the sacred pool.

During the ceremonies the ' Drum Priest ' always wears a live chick on his left hip, hanging from a long string round his neck. The dancers do the same in most plays. The cord, made of young palm-leaves, called by Kalabari Emonnumonnu, is passed through three rings of plantains above either foot of this strange ornament, which is said to be a sacrifice to the dead, so that all evil influences may be averted. After the play, both chicken and plantain are thrown into the creek. On the death of a chief the leader of the funeral procession is similarly decorated, as is also the custom for the ' eldest daughter ' in Calabar.

Towards the end of 1914 we were present at a celebration of the Opungi and Seki plays at Buguma. The first figure to run out, wearing a palm-leaf head-dress, was the servant or ' policeman,' Fuka-fuka, ' the man who drives the small boys before Opungi comes out.'

Owing to the heavy downpour Opungi did not appear, but his servant, Seki the crocodile, came out first ' because it did not mind the rain.' There was a fish in the mouth of the head-dress, or rather dangling from its jaws, and a small chick hanging from the back. At a given signal the image drew the curved knife which it wore over its left hip, and ran at the spectators ; on which the ' chorus,' one of whom carried a green bough, surrounded and drove him off, uttering groan-like cries in unison.

According to Chief David West India : ' Before Government came they used to run at and wound people, especially non-members.' Similar occurrences took place at the performance of the Ebbe, Imgbila and Egbelegbe plays. The curved knife worn by Seki was of bronze with three grooves, set in an elaborately carved handle of polished wood, and was called Okulogie.

One of the performers at the Mine play, which by chance was going to be held at the same time but was not given for fear the robes should suffer damage, bore a huge dagger of ancient Spanish or Portuguese workmanship, one-half of which was decorated with a finely engraved pattern. The grip was of beaten copper, and the sheath of beautifully worked brass. After the Seki play, as the rain showed no

signs of abating, it was decided that no further performances should be given, so the Opongi and Seki players gathered and danced in the club-house.

Later on, in March 1915, we saw the Okuku play at Buguma. This apparently originated among the Ijaw of Brass District, and was introduced to the Kalabari by Black Duke. Old West India, however, was so pleased with it that he took upon himself to play it and, in consequence, a fight ensued between the two Houses. The dispute was referred to the Long Juju at Aro Chuku, which decided that the Black Duke House should perform the sacrifices, while the other family should carry out the celebrations.

Hitherto no women had been allowed to enter the club-house or see the head-dresses when not worn by the images. It was explained that, should one inadvertently have been pushed over the threshold by the crowd, she must pay a fine of one bottle of rum.

The chief play in the Brass region is the Ogoni, about which Mr. M. M. C. Wari gave the following information :

'*Ogoni—the Wonderful Play of Odiewa*'

'To get the masks for the masquerade display certain prescribed ceremonial sacrifices must be propitiated to the principal water spirit, Owu Yingi [Owu mother], responsible for their custody, so that it may please him to place the Ogonis—seven in number—at the disposal of the Sekapu for the purpose of the masquerades named after them.

'These Ogonis are believed to be the only Owus who still maintain intercourse with men.

'The persons entrusted with the office of invoking the good-will of the Owu mother must keep holy and chaste for at least seven days, during which period they are forbidden to partake of any food, subsisting only on native chalk and sweet kola and Alligator pepper. On the seventh day, after bath [for purposes of purification], the Ogonis are called by beating on an object of the cult prepared for the purpose.

'If everything on board is correct and to their satisfaction, the seven Ogonis, in the guise of brazen instruments much resembling a laundry iron, emanate from the water. While

HEAD-DRESS OF A WATER SPIRIT CULT.

AN IMAGE IN THE OKUKU PLAY, KALABARI.

facing p. 316.

they are on board the priest and the other men on the canoe keep from them an arm's length, since, if anyone breathes on them, the party loses his nostril and becomes completely disfigured otherwise.

' On reaching home they are placed in a special shrine built for the purpose and guarded. Meanwhile the whole town is fenced round with mangrove wood of uniform girth —*i.e.* 4 feet—as it is believed that, at the sight of the crowd of onlookers, the Ogonis become bashful and would make for their home in the water with the owner underneath them.

' It is very strange to say that not a child or grown-up man would use any of the Ogoni dance songs while in his house or engaged on other work, nor would he imitate the music produced by the drums connected with the cult, as it is held that the violation of this rule will break the truce with the Owu mother. It is also very difficult to get an Odiewan to give a Christian the words of the invocation made to the Owu mother, or to a woman, no matter what caste.'

Except for those given by the Obukere society, or held at certain times of the year before Mbari shrines, Ibo of this region have no system of ' plays ' corresponding to that just recorded from the Kalabari. Dances take place, it is true, in honour of certain jujus or in celebration of festivals ; but for these, save in the case about to be described, no special dress is worn or ritual carried out.

The most important social events of the year are the wrestling matches, held with the idea of strengthening the crops by sympathetic magic. For instance, all the inhabitants of Elele come together at the beginning of the rainy season to witness one of these contests in honour of the juju Aya-Eke. This is continued on every big Eke day for about three months or more until the new yam festival, during which the feast of the ancestral spirits is also celebrated. Later, wrestling matches are held in Omopo Quarter in honour of the new corn juju Mbara, after which all wrestling finishes for the year. A curious point about these matches is that the onlookers at once interfere and separate the players if either of them seems to be growing angry or tired. This is

possibly done with the idea that such a result might, by sympathetic magic, have an ill effect upon the crops.[1]

There are very few magical plays among Ibo as compared with Ibibio. At Awka, according to Obi Amara : ' During the dry season they make a big play. A thin thread is put up on a big tree called Akpo (the silk cotton tree). Up this a man climbs. Then he becomes juju at once.

' Sometimes a big fire is made in the day-time in an open place. They dance round it. One man goes inside and stays there till the dances finish ; then he goes out and the fire cannot burn him.'

Ibo employ a considerable number of musical instruments, among which the most important and sweetest-toned is a variety of giant xylophone, made from cross slabs of cork wood pinned, by means of wooden slivers, on to two fresh-felled plantain trunks, which are usually laid over a depression dug for this purpose. The original name of this instrument was Ngelenge ; but this was altered to Odome at the time when a new fashion in dancing became general. This roughly-made but melodious instrument is still used as an accompaniment at most of the principal plays and dances.

Next comes the Onono, a bow-lyre played by the right hand striking a palm sliver against the string held in position between the lips. It is ' stopped ' by means of a small round stick which is moved up and down from the opposite end of the tie-tie string. The sound is supposed to imitate the twitter of birds and the flutter of wings. It certainly produces a particularly soft warbling note.

There are many kinds of horn and trumpet, under which heading one may include those made of narrow gourds, often nearly a yard in length, stopped by the hand at the broad end and with the mouthpiece a few inches from the top. These are called by Ibo Okporo or Mbobo. Cow horns (Opi) are also much used, as are carefully carved wooden imitations ; but, as is natural, the most prized instruments of this kind are those formed from elephant tusks. The latter are named Odo, while the player himself is called Okw'odo (' the feet of the Odo ').

[1] For a fuller description see *Some Nigerian Fertility Cults.*

(*a*) POTTERY DRUM.
(*b*) RATTLE OR GONG *(See p. 277, last paragraph).*
(*c*) (*e*) (*f*) WOODEN DRUMS.
(*d*) COWHIDE FAN.

IBO AND KALABARI.

facing p. 318.

The drum language is used by all peoples hereabouts, but is developed to its greatest extent among the Kalabari, who may join no club until proficient in this art. 'Every Kalabari Saturday evening they went out to practise and the old men listened. A man who wanted to join a club, especially the Sakapu society, must pass an examination first. A drum was always taken in war canoes, and then anyone who met with misfortune—attacked when alone, for instance—could call on his drum and let his friends know exactly how many enemies were coming, at what hour, in what direction, etc. Every big man in the town has his drum name.'

Drums made of wood and skin are known as Nkwa (Akwa by Kalabari), those carved of wood only are termed Ekere. An interesting variety of this instrument, named Okwe and found among Ikwerri Ibo, resembles a native chair, save that the seat is more rounded and hollowed out. The ordinary wooden drums are called Kpokpo by Kalabari, and Nkoro by Ibo.

The great Ikuru war drums, often ten to twelve feet in length, are among the chief cult objects of Ibo throughout Aba District. When the one at Ohambele is beaten, only those who have cut off the head of a man may draw near 'to look upon the face of the drum.' A full description of these instruments has, however, been given elsewhere ('Some Nigerian Fertility Cults').

Another interesting variety of drum is that called Idudu Egu by Ibo, and Kuku by Kalabari. These are of pottery and much resemble water jars, about one and a half feet in height with a short narrowish neck. They may only be played by women, and are struck by a beater made from the spadix of a palm-nut bunch or dried palm-leaves bound together.

Drums used for special plays and ceremonies are given names of their own, and will be found described under other headings. Rattles are of all kinds and shapes, and are generally known as Asakasaka among both Kalabari and Ibo.

The following games are most in vogue in this region :

Ngea, played in a round hole made in the mud floor by means of small, flat-nosed cockle shells.

Te'en Mbi (' throwing round things '), a sort of skittles, for which limes or oranges are used. Each side puts down three, arranged in a triangle, with a fourth placed on top. The player who knocks all down with a single shot wins. If one fruit is left in position, however, he loses double points.

Abili, a kind of draughts, played on a board the surface of which is arranged in alternate raised and depressed squares. The pieces are male and female, oblong for the former and circular for the latter. The under side of each is marked with a cross. The ' men ' are set in rows on the raised squares, each sex facing the other at opposite ends of the board. They move and take as in the European game. When one player has succeeded in entering his opponent's back row, he turns his piece over, so that the cross comes uppermost, after which it may be moved either backward or forward.

Egele, said to be played by means of young corn leaves bound together into a ball. The opponents stand facing the throwers and, as the green globe is flung up into the air, try to lasso it by means of tie-tie looped in a slip-knot. This, naturally, only takes place at the time of young corn.

Igwa (jumping) is practised ; and children sometimes hold mimic fights with lumps of clay for weapons. Skipping is also common ; and many varieties of cat's cradle are known.

CHAPTER XXVI

Tabus, Omens, War, etc.

Among Ibo, priests and especially Ezale are subject to many tabus. No priest, for instance, may sit down upon the ground or, during ceremonies, share a seat with another person. Such men travel very little, and never at night-time. On Eke day each priest of the Earth Goddess gives food to his Ale, and on that day no Ezale will leave his house. Chiefs may never eat cassava nor anything that has fallen to the ground. No dog may enter the private room of juju priest or priestess ; while, the strictest rule of all, no Ezale may see a corpse dead ' within the forbidden month.'

According to the statement of Amuneke of Umo Yechi, later confirmed by the testimony of several Ibo chiefs : Before the head juju men eat new yams they must first make a fire in a special house within their compound, usually in the room in which the seed yams are kept. This fire must not die out for three weeks—*i.e.* twenty-four days—and during that time no one may take wood from it to light one on any other hearth. The priest himself may not eat or drink outside this house, nor may anybody enter to eat with him without special invitation; and, even so, they must bring their own cup or plate. No pot in which new yams have been cooked may be brought into this house, nor dish on which such food has been placed.

When the twenty-four days are over, the priest buys cloth, tombo and new yams ; ' then goes to wash his juju, whether Chi, Ala, Amad'onhia, Otaminni or Olaba—all of which have great power in our country. After doing this he may eat new yams.'

It is natural to find that the keeping up of a sacred

fire is part of the ritual of the Lightning God, as also that of Chi, his mother, and his consort the Earth Goddess Ale ; but it is less obvious why the same law should be imposed upon the priests of water jujus, such as Otaminni.

Among Aro also, according to the testimony of Obi Amara, given on the authority of his father, an Aro native doctor of great repute :

'In olden days a fire was always kept burning in the principal shrines of the juju Kamalo, which is our Amade Onhia. There used to be one of these at Ozori, and one at Nduoti. The fire was kept in the juju house, and no menstruous woman might go inside. A very old woman always guarded the fire to keep it from going out.

'After night-fall, about seven o'clock evening-time, a man might go and ask the servant of the juju to give him a small stick from the fire ; but if he went to look at it at any other time he would be struck blind.

'In very old days, it is said, before we got matches, or even matchets from white men, such fires were lighted by means of fire sticks which were called Obu Obolla. I do not know the name of the pointed stick ; but the other one, in which this was turned round and round, was called Momowa.'

This information is unconfirmed.

Among Kalabari, fire was always kept burning in the shrines of the ancestors, and a young boy slept near by to tend it day and night, as it was forbidden to let it go out.

The wood from any tree struck by lightning seems to have been tabu throughout this region for cooking or for heating and lighting the house. Such fuel might only be used for juju or magical purposes.

Among all tribes hereabouts women are subject to many tabus at certain periods, which will be found under various headings. Several of these tabus mentioned by Mr. N. W. Thomas are, however, not enforced here. For instance, he states : 'A husband may not carry his wife. A wife may not whistle for her husband. A widow may not see the corpse of her dead husband.' Here, on the other hand, all agreed that, should a woman be sick and no relatives

be at hand to tend her, the husband could carry her out and wash her. Also, though whistling is disliked for women, as formerly among ourselves, it is not forbidden. Again, although Kalabari widows must go forth from the death chamber without letting their eyes rest on their husband's corpse, directly the breath has left the body, yet the prohibition only lasts until it has been prepared for burial. To Ibo of this region no such rule applies at all.

To use the left hand in passing anything is forbidden, since it is regarded as impertinent and unlucky. It is even worse if a woman, more especially a wife, should pass anything in this way.

When a man lies on the ground it is forbidden for another to step over him ; even, should a foot be stretched out, no one may step across it, since it is thought possible that a bad sickness might be transmitted in this manner.

In former days, among Kalabari, no one might ring a big bell, because these were sacred to Awome-Ka-So, but members of the Sakapu Club were permitted to ring hand-bells during their plays. Among this people it is rare for anyone to start a journey upon Eke day, since to do so would bring ill fortune.

Many Kalabari never speak while fishing, for fear, by so doing, they might break the juju for a good catch. This is the reason why a man will often not reply if called to from a distance. When a shark or manatee has been killed, the flesh may not be eaten until a ceremony of atonement has been performed before the ancestral shrine in order to appease the spirit of the slain beast. Chief Bagshaw Yellow of Bakana once caught a manatee which he kept for three days, during which time he poured out rum at intervals before the Nduen Fobara. Afterwards the flesh was cut up and shared out.

Chief G. A. Yellow added :

' Among our people the manatee is considered as a very sacred animal. If a fisherman chanced to kill one, his family must perform certain ceremonies and make offering before the ancestral images. The slayer must be kept within the house for three days, during which he is rubbed

with cam-wood and yellow powder in order to purify him. On the third day the family come together to feast upon the meat, a small piece of which is given to the head of every big House in the town to lay before the shrine of his forefathers.

'During the three days, while the fisherman is confined to the house, the women of his family come and sing at dawn and evening. All this is done because it is believed that the manatee was once a human being. Its spirit might therefore be angry and avenge itself upon the slayer unless the proper rites were carried out.

'In the old days the shark [Owu Akpana or Ofirima] was also sacred; if one was killed, the slayer took it together with some manillas to the juju priest, who was himself descended from a man said to have been saved by one of these creatures. The whole town prayed to the shark, asking him to look after them if their canoe capsized.' According to Captain Crow, the Kalabari pilots threw 'propitiatory offerings of beef, bread, etc., to the sharks before taking ships up the New Calabar River and from there.'

Fishing nets are carefully kept in a place where they are not likely to be touched; usually they are hung up to the roof. Palm wine should not be brought anywhere near them, for it is thought that, should a single drop be allowed to fall upon one of these great nets, it would never catch fish more. Fishing spears, too, are always tended like sacred things, and may not be used for other purposes. On starting out, a man takes a piece of palm-leaf from out the thatch, or a branch of the Odumdum tree, and rubs this over the spears in order to purify them from any taint they might have contracted.

If leopard or crocodile should be seen while hunting or fishing, Kalabari never use its name when speaking to their friends but are only permitted to say: 'Owi nama ["wild animal"] is here.' During the performance of ceremonies for the snake cult, too, a python may not be called by the usual word Odumu, but must be referred to as Diki ('rope'), while ordinary snakes are spoken of as Nangwa 'ye ('long

thing '). Crocodile flesh is forbidden to those who worship certain jujus—for instance, the priest of the Ndonni juju Onita.

In olden times Ifawkaw people never ate leopard nor Kalabari cow flesh, because these animals had helped their ancestors. The story goes: 'Once the Awome had war with Amafa people. It was late afternoon. On their return they lost their way in some very thick bush as they were trying to find their way home. As they hurried back, pursued by the enemy, suddenly they saw a cow ahead of them grazing on leaves. So soon as she heard the trampling she looked at them, and some turned to run away, thinking it was a bush cow; while others thought they would go near it—if they died, no matter. Amid this discussion they decided to go near. As they approached, she went off. They followed her track for hours till suddenly they came upon the road to their town and got back safely. So, in gratitude, the country made a law and regarded cows and bulls as one of their jujus. Nowadays some Christians eat it, but none who hold to old customs.'

Among the Etche Ibo there is a well-known family called Omo-Ajo-Ala ('children of the flat on ground'), so named because a snake is supposed to have saved one of their ancestors from death in olden days. For them, therefore, as for all python worshippers, those reptiles are tabu.

Among the Omokku and Abaw Ibo there is a law prohibiting the climbing of palm trees. When coconuts or bunches of kernels are wanted, therefore, these must be cut by a man from a neighbouring tribe. Even some fallen trees cannot be removed without a sacrifice, as is shown by the following statement made by Chief Chibo in Omokku Native Court (Case No. 1869/13):

'The tree fell down on the maile [*sic*] road—cross [ing] over the road. Our cause of not cut it out [is that] our juju tells us not to cut it except we kill one goat before we fell it down and take it off from the road.'

At Omokku, too, there is a tabu on female dogs, which are never permitted to enter the town. The reason for this singular restriction was explained as follows:

'In olden days an enemy town, big too much, came to fight

war against us. At that time our king was too old to flee, so the men of Omokku dug a great hole and placed him therein together with food and water. Then they covered over the hole and hid it well with earth and branches. Now the king had a little she-dog which loved him ; so she sought for her master all round till she came to the place where he lay hidden. There she scratched on the ground over the hole to get to him. The enemy saw and killed the king. Owing to this our people made an Nsaw that no she-dog might live in their land for evermore.'

Later it was discovered that a similar law obtains among the Ikwerri people of Ndelle (particulars of which are given on p. 253). It is also in force among all Okkpaw towns and their fellow Ikwerri to the south and south-east. The origin of the custom is, however, forgotten in this part.

Women here are forbidden to climb up anything high. There was great trouble lately, both at Nkarahia and at Amafa, because certain women relatives ascended to the upper floor of two chiefs' ' storied ' houses.

Reference to other tabus will be found in the index.

Like all West Africans, the inhabitants of this region are firm believers in omens. For instance, should you sneeze without having a cold, it is a sign that someone is talking about you, or that a stranger approaches your house. If your eyebrow or top eyelid twitches, it presages good ; while twitching in the bottom eyelid is a sign of coming evil. Twitching on the right side of the body is good ; on the left, bad. For instance, if a man is away from home and anxious about someone whom he has left sick there, a twitching felt in his right shoulder portends that the friend will get well ; if in the left, that he will die.

A twitching on the back is a sign that people are talking of you ; a buzzing in the right ear that people are saying good things of you, and in the left ear that they are taking away your character.

When setting out on a journey, should your right foot strike against a stone or the canoe side, it is a presage of good ; if the left one, of bad.

Before starting out by water, Kalabari consult the canoe, asking : 'Will my venture prove profitable?' The canoe spirit will give answer by rocking. The late Chief Yellow always said that he would rather consult the canoe spirit than go to a native doctor, since he had never known it prophesy falsely.

While on a journey, should kingfisher or mud bird fly across path or canoe from right to left, it is a good omen to those whose first-born is a boy ; but the contrary, if the first child is a girl. It is a bad omen if a bird lets droppings fall on to a man starting out on a journey, hunting, etc.

Meteorites are thought to be signs sent by the sky, but 'earth folk do not know the meaning of them.' At full moon and high tide mad people are always said to get worse.

Here, as everywhere on the West Coast, much attention is paid to dreams, which are divided into classes, each with its special significance. For instance, should one dream of a fine play, this is thought to foretell the death of a 'big man' in that town or family. When a man sees a dead chief in a dream, it is taken to mean that a living chief will die or become very sick. Should anyone dream of joining in a feast, it portends evil to his House ; while, to dream of a man, who seldom or never dances, doing such a thing, foretells his death. Should a man dream of sickness, it portends health ; if of health, it means that sickness threatens.

To dream of a snake foretells that a child will be born to the House, or, in the words of our informant, that 'longed-for descendants are about to come.'

Scapegoats are used on many occasions. For instance, when Awka Ibo doctors make medicine, whether on behalf of the whole town or of a particular family, all those for whom the sacrifice is to be made come together. Young palm-leaves are bound round the animal to be sacrificed, after which it is laid upon a layer of Ogrisi branches and lifted up in the priest's hands. He then carries it round all the people, first seven times in the direction opposite to the hands of a watch, and secondly seven times in the contrary

direction. Afterwards a doctor, followed by all the people, goes down to the river or into the bush and there throws away the sacrifice, alive but bound, and bearing with it the offences and afflictions of those for whom it was offered.

On some occasions the victim is tied to the top of a long pole and set up in some spot chosen by doctor or juju priest. This is usually done after a family or town has suffered from sickness or misfortune thought to be caused by evil spirits. The sacrifice is made so that the tormentors should accept this and leave the inhabitants in peace.

On the last night of the year Kalabari used to make use of a real scapegoat. This they drove off into the bush, bearing all the sins and troubles of the town. At other times, when misfortune fell upon a place and the chiefs consulted an oracle to learn the cause, the juju usually demanded a similar scapegoat. This was bound with young palm-leaves and driven round the town, while the native doctor shook Igbiri rattles, calling out : ' Let all evil come from the town to this goat ! ' It was then thrown into the creek.

At Okrika a ' scape-dog ' was offered at the time of the new corn. According to Chief Sampson Adoki :

' Seven young men, dressed in palm-leaves and each bearing a paddle in his hand, went round the town. In their midst was one carrying a basket containing a live puppy. After passing through every street, the paddle bearers went down to the water-side, took canoe and pushed off ; while the man with the scape-dog went to the other end of the town to await them. Here he was obliged to stand up to his waist in water till the canoe drew near. Then he would call to them to take the basket from him, on which a mimic fight ensued, the paddlers pelting him with eggs to keep him off. Seven times they approached and retreated and at the seventh the basket was thrown into the canoe, whereon the palm-leaf men would paddle off at top speed till they came near the sea at Bonny part. There the dog was thrown overboard into deep water, to float away, bearing with it the sins, sickness and troubles which would otherwise have fallen on the Okrikans. Before returning

home, the paddlers were obliged to bathe and cast from them all that had been worn when carrying the evil out to sea.'

On the West Coast the word 'war' is used for the very smallest of fights. For instance, an Okwuzi man was charged with 'assaulting and resisting a Court Messenger in the execution of his duty by forming a civil war against him at Obokoffia.' Owing, no doubt, principally to the slave trade, inter-tribal and town fights were common amongst Ibo till the end of last century. A glimpse into the former position of affairs was given us in 1914, when, while passing along the Ndelle road, we stopped to rest under a juju tree. An old, old woman came up and stood, leaning on her stick and gazing intently. Suddenly she began to speak: 'Never before since the day I was born have my eyes seen the white man. Soon I must die, by reason of many years; therefore I am come to look upon you that, before death, I may know the appearance of white men.' Then, with hands joined and bending almost to the ground, she continued: 'Salutations and blessings and peace! for in my young days we knew nothing but fear, peril and continual fighting. White men alone have brought safety and peace to our land. Therefore am I glad to have looked upon your face before I die.'

Some Ibo of the interior are said to have used native bombs made by placing substances likely to attract wasps and bees in the bottom halves of double calabashes. So soon as a good number had collected, the lids were clapped on and the two sections bound together. When the enemy approached, the cords were partially cut through and the calabashes flung at the advancing soldiers. They broke in falling and the enraged wasps rushed out, stinging so furiously that a stampede was usually the result.

In recent fighting among Aba Ibo cannon made from tree-trunks were used, while the trenches were of the most modern and improved type, S-shaped and with communication trenches. It is possible, however, that these latest methods were due to German influence.

Unlike Ekoi and Ibibio, where women were always spared during war-time, even when acting as scouts for their own

side, little gentleness seems to have been shown by Ibo to age or sex. Mr. A. E. Smith, agent for the Company of African Merchants, related a case on which he was chosen to sit as assessor. There had been trouble between two Ibo peoples of the interior, and the victors had captured some of the most important of their enemies. Most influential of all the captives was a very old woman, and upon her they decided to wreak vengeance. First every joint of her body was bent backward. Incredible as it may appear, she still survived this treatment and was finally buried alive.

Among Kalabari and all other Ijaw, women were also, as a rule, killed except when pregnant ; these latter, together with any children, were carried off and never returned. In the Warri region all women and children were killed.

Occasionally captives met with a better fate. Once, when fighting a neighbouring tribe, the late chief Yellow took four prisoners, three men and a woman. The first three he killed, but brought home and married the fourth. The other chiefs objected, saying : ' Such a woman is no fit wife for you. Give her, if you will, to one of your members or sell her into captivity.' He refused, but in the end the Long Juju sent to demand the captive, who was accordingly delivered up.

Among Kalabari the declaration of war was usually made by the sending of the head chief's walking-stick, which was only used on occasions of ceremony. Even in 1915 complaint was brought before me by the men of a certain town that they had been terrified by the arrival of a messenger from one of the principal chiefs bearing his master's staff in his hand. The sending of yams and gunpowder meant with them, as with Ibo, ' Choose peace or war. We are ready for whichever you wish.' Among all Ijaw notice was given to the enemy of the time and place of the proposed fight.

On the outbreak of hostilities with a distant tribe, a war chief was chosen to lead the forces in the field ; the general conduct of operations, however, was settled by the chiefs at home. Before the warriors set forth, sacrifices were always offered to the ancestral images to entreat their help, as also to the Okpolodo juju. The big drums were beaten,

elephant-tusk horns blown, and rum poured out to the accompaniment of prayers such as : 'Follow us ! Help us conquer and capture something for you !' No man might speak to a woman while on the war-path, nor sleep with one from the day before setting out until the Peri ceremony was finished after their return. When the warriors came back, all the guns were collected and the native doctor made sacrifices to them before allowing them to be taken into their owners' houses. The procedure followed as to the treatment of prisoners has been already described on p. 302.

'Doctors make powders for people in war-time so that, if they rub some upon the forehead or feet, the enemy will pass by without seeing them. They also make a powder for a man to put in his hand and blow in front of him, so that it becomes dark like a tornado and, when he has passed to where he wants to go, it clears off again. A small grey bird is also used as war medicine. They cut the warrior and rub in the preparation ; they also put some into a belt which he wears round his waist. Afterwards no bullet can harm him. We call this medicine Abigwe.'

As with Efik, Kalabari women must show a bold front and hopeful heart in war-time. One of the principal rules was that a happy atmosphere must be kept up in the homes of the absent warriors. Every day the women went singing round the town, robed in their best, to pour libations before all the principal jujus. Special prayers were made at the shrine of Awome-Ka-So to entreat her to have the absent ones in her care and grant success to their arms. Native doctors were also constantly asked for news of the fighters.

In every warrior's house, each day the tables were spread with the owner's favourite dishes, as if his return were expected at any minute. 'This was done that the soul of the fighting men might abide, day and night, satisfied within their bodies, rather than be driven forth by hunger towards feasts spread to ensnare them by the enemy.' In this case they would be liable to capture by hostile magicians and nevermore return home to kith and kin.

During his absence the wives kept together in the husband's part of the compound, instead of separating each to her own

house as in ordinary times. After nightfall lights were kept burning in the men's quarters, just as if the warriors were at home, and the wives slept together in the room of their common husband. They might not lock up the house, and fires must never be allowed to die out. It was the duty of each wife to fight against sad thoughts : ' For, should one of them give herself over to a sorrowful mind, this would have bad effect upon the absent husband.'

However severe the fighting was, heralds were sacred. Well-known citizens were chosen from neutral towns to act as messengers when the war was at its worst. They walked along, unarmed, and the enemy spared them because they came to try to make peace for both sides.

Among this people, when two tribes, or towns, grew weary of fighting and wished to come to terms, it was customary to send to the priest of the Ke juju Keni Opu-So. Then the latter went, in his own canoe, the bow of which was bedecked with young palm-leaves, to the place where the former foes awaited him. There he announced : ' We have come to end war between you two. Now let us fix time and place where the covenant [Obbawku] may be sworn.'

On the appointed day the hostile towns came together with the people of Ke, bringing the necessary offerings for sacrifice. These were a sheep, a length of black, or dark blue, cloth, gunpowder and grass or grass seed. Upon these the former foes took oath of friendship. Thereupon the priest invoked all jujus, especially Abazi the sea, ' because he it is who brings all the trade from overseas,' and said : ' To-day we Ke people bring peace to your town. From now on neither may have evil mind against the other.'

' Mong-ba	waminni	Ke		omminni	ma	ama
' To-day	we	Ke [people]		you	two	towns

miete obbawku - pia.
make covenant peace.

Omminni	ma	ama		bari	sibiu	bio
You	two	towns [must]		stop	bad feeling	inside

mbaw.'
heart.'

He then drew forward the sheep, which he clove in twain, saying: 'Should either town fight again, may it be cleft asunder like this sheep!'

'Omminni owu ke omminni abu pakate bebe
'[If] you fight among your selves happen really
omminni ama main puaba anana. me
[may] your towns in two split [as this] sheep is
pubara!'
split!'

Then, lifting on high the piece of dark cloth, he said: 'As this cloth is dark so may the offending town be darkened!'

'Onno kuru-kuru bara, omminni ama saw
'[As] cloth black [or dark] is, your town will
kuru-kuru bari!'
dark be!'

Next, setting fire to the gunpowder, he said: 'As this powder is burnt, so may fire burn the guilty town!'

'Omminni owu saw te bebe, awpolli omminni ama
'[If] you fight will be, [may] fire your town
koriva!'
burn up!'

Lastly, holding out the seeded grass, he said: 'Should either fight again, may that town be covered with grass!' (*i.e.* be ruined and deserted).

'Omminni owu saw te bebe, osua omminni ama
'[If] you fight will be, [may] grass your town
bi!'
cover!'

After these invocations were finished, the Ke juju was borne round to the principal shrines of the two towns.

The laws of the dominant juju Awome-Ka-So with regard to the sanctity of human life have already been mentioned on p. 70. Even prisoners of war, who were reserved to be killed for the Peri play, had to be slain before reaching the country under her rule. Could they but escape across her boundary, they were safe. Usually, therefore, they were

put to death in the canoes on rounding the last corner, from which the town might be sighted. As mentioned on p. 302, during the Peri play, small portions of human flesh were eaten by the warriors and chiefs ; but this appears to be the only occasion on which even ceremonial cannibalism was practised by the Kalabari. Okrikans were much addicted to eating human flesh until quite recently, though the bodies of witches and wizards were never touched, *vide* p. 87.

Among Ibo, cannibalism flourished exceedingly ; only last year (1915) 'joints' of unmistakable origin were discovered for sale in one of the Aba markets and the guilty parties punished. Under present conditions the practice is rapidly dying out. So far as can be gathered, Ibo cannibalism was mostly due to a desire for flesh, since the supply of game proved far too small for the needs of the thick population.

According to sworn evidence given in Igrita Native Court (Case No. 9/12), an Ikwerri Ibo chief named Wafor, who was charged with assaulting, and attempting to seize, some Court Messengers, had cried out to his retainers : ' ' Human flesh is very nice. You must not let them go.'

Prisoners taken in war were always brought alive to the town, there slain and the flesh shared out among the people. Strangers and traders were often seized, and slaves bought, for the same purpose. The skulls were exhibited, as among Kalabari. Formerly a slave was sacrificed by every chief on the occasion of digging new yams. Now, only goats and sheep are slaughtered at such a time. Sacrifices were always made by native doctors to protect the slayer against the ghost of the slain.

Save at the Peri play, human flesh was apparently tabu to women among all tribes, the reason given being : ' Because it makes fierce those who eat.' From many reports of quarrels brought before court, it would, indeed, seem that no artificial stimulus was needed. As an instance, the following Okrikan case may be cited :

Opu Wari stated on oath : ' I am a wife of prosecutor. On or about nine days ago my husband bought a canoe from a Brass man at Chief Daniel Kalio's water-side. When the people came to demand the money, he took the four pounds,

and we were going to pay it when the second accused caught hold of my husband and the first accused bit off his mouth and ate the flesh in my presence.'

It may be remarked that biting is very common in all assaults.

Most Ibo file their teeth, though the practice is now dying out. They say that they do this 'because it looks fine'; but they are taunted by neighbouring tribes, who say: 'You do this to make your teeth sharp in order to tear human flesh.'

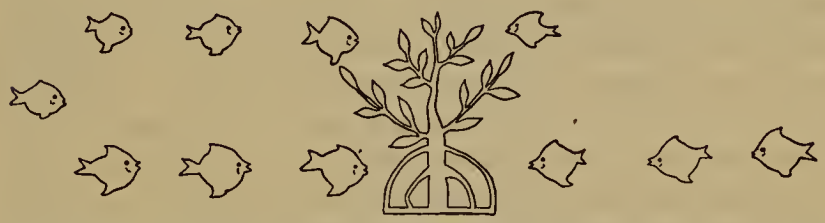


FIG. 21.—The War Flag of the John Bull Family. (See p. 276.) The right-hand top corner was hidden by a modern Union Jack stitched over the old fabric.

FIG. 22.—Sword in Sheath made by Ikwerri Ibo.

CHAPTER XXVII

Folk-Lore, etc.

As will be seen from many of the beliefs already mentioned, folk-lore is still a living influence in the lives of the people ; but, on the other hand, there is a curious dearth of folk-tales. This is explained by Chief Obenibo as follows : ' In olden days many such stories were known to our people. The women used to sit round every evening relating them, while the children listened and learnt to tell them in turn ; but those who had been taught in school put an end to this, saying that such fables were heathen lies and must never be repeated any more. So now nearly all are forgotten.'

By dint of careful searching, a few stories were gleaned, mostly from very old women. The greater number of these resembled those recorded by Mr. N. W. Thomas too closely to be worth reprinting. Two, however, contain a point unique, to the best of my belief, among West Coast tales. To quote a repeated statement made in the columns of *The Times Literary Supplement* of December 10, 1914 :

' There is one very curious point which these and other stories of the kind have in common—that though these professional jokers, so to call them, have the better of all the animals with whom they ordinarily enter into a contest of wits, there is one . . . who always has the better of them all, even of the jokers themselves—the tortoise. . . . Why is the tortoise credited with such wisdom ? One wonders.'

In the two Kalabari tales here given entitled ' Ekaki, Isu and the Wife of King Oba,' and ' How Dog brought Fire to Earth,' it will be seen that Tortoise was completely outwitted in the first and partially so in the second.

Ekaki (*Tortoise*), *Isu* (*Hare*) *and the King's Wife*

Isu and Ekaki were friends. They went hunting and made a trap to catch animals. The first thing they caught was a leopard. Isu said to Ekaki: 'This animal is my share. When Piri-me-mba-bin ["bush-all-up"] is caught, that will be yours.' But Ekaki said: 'No! I want part of leopard.' Afterwards he agreed and Isu took the whole. Next day they caught elephant. Isu said: 'This again is my share. When Piri-me-mba-bin is taken, that will be yours.' Ekaki was annoyed because Isu was so small and talked so big. Each day the same thing happened. Always Isu took the catch. One day Ekaki asked Isu: 'Why is it that Piri-me-mba-bin never comes?' Isu said: 'Wait a little. Next morning it will be all right.'

Isu went to the rain-makers and asked them to make medicine. Rain poured and poured so that by the morning all the bush was filled up with water. Ekaki went and looked at the trap. Only a small crab was to be seen. Isu said: 'That is your share to-day.' Ekaki answered: 'All right! You make me fool!' So he took crab and went away.

Ekaki walked alone. He turned round a corner in the path and saw in the bush the wife of King Oba. She had been missing for three days, and all the people had been searching for her. At once Ekaki raised his gun and shot the woman. She fell down dead, and he covered her with leaves and branches. After that he went to find Isu. So soon as this one was found, Ekaki called to him: 'Come quickly with your gun. I have tracked a very fine beast in the bush.' Then he led his false friend to the place where the dead woman lay, saying: 'The game is there, caught in the branches.' Isu said: 'I see nothing,' but Ekaki answered: 'Never mind. Only fire.' This Isu did, and afterwards they went together and found the king's wife lying dead.

Ekaki cried out: 'You made me fool! Now you have killed the king's wife. I will report you to the king.'

Isu went to his house and cooked chop, then dressed fine and gave play. Ekaki heard the sound of the drums and

went to see what was happening. He found a great feast spread and many fine things lying round about. So he asked : ' How can you make play after killing a big woman such as this ? ' Isu answered : ' Oh ! that is all right ! I went and told Oba what had happened, and he said : " That is a good thing which you have done. I will give you splendid things for killing this woman, whom I myself tried to kill for three days. You shall get many more gifts also." '

When Ekaki heard this, he said : ' What ! All these good gifts have come to you ! It was I who really killed the woman. I will go at once and report it to the king.'

He ran and came before Oba, crying : ' O King ! Why do you give all the things to Isu ? It was I who killed your wife and covered her with leaves. Then I called to Isu and told him to shoot at the place where the dead body lay.'

The king wondered and said to his people : ' Chain Tortoise, for he confesses that he has shot my wife whom I have sought for three days.' So Ekaki was chained up, and saw that Isu had made him fool again. So he thought what he could do to avenge himself on his enemy. After a while, therefore, he said to the king : ' Isu is a very clever tailor. Bid him make clothes for you. If he refuses, you will know that he is not your friend and can kill him.' On hearing this, Oba sent to call Isu before him and asked him to make some fine clothes. Isu said : ' Good. I know how to do this, but, in order to sew well, I must have the thread which is within the neck of Ekaki.' Therefore the king commanded his men to slay Tortoise and take out the thread. Thus was Ekaki overcome by the wisdom of Isu. After the death of his enemy, Isu said : ' This thread is too old. I cannot sew with it.' Thus he excused himself for not sewing the good clothes for King Oba, and went away in peace to his own place.

How Dog brought Fire to Earth

(Told by Mrs. A. K. B. Manuel)

Once Obiri (Dog) and Ekaki (Tortoise) set out for a strange country. The owners of this land were their

friends and wanted to entertain them. When chop was ready, they played out upon the summoning drum: 'Tortoise! Come and please yourself with the food.' Tortoise quarrelled with Dog, saying: 'My name is mentioned but not yours. Therefore you may not eat.'

Next day the same thing happened again. 'Tortoise! Tortoise! Come now, for all is ready!' was beaten upon the drum. So again Tortoise drove Dog away. After three days the latter was dying of starvation and could hardly creep about. The owners of the town asked: 'Why do you look so ill?' Dog said: 'Since we arrived, Tortoise has never let me have food, because you only mentioned his name.' After that they said: 'Wait!' and when the food was ready, they never called Tortoise's name any more, only Dog.

After the first day Tortoise noticed the change and said to Dog: 'Let us go away now.' The owner of the house gave them two eggs at parting, one to each, and said: 'When you want anything, strike an egg upon the ground and a fine big goat will appear. This is my gift.'

They had not gone far before Tortoise broke his egg. A big, fine goat came out. Tortoise killed and prepared it. In those days there was no fire upon earth; only the Heaven was so near that men could cook by the heat of the sun. Tortoise ate all the meat, only giving Dog one very small piece. This Dog put in his mouth and kept between his jaws but would not eat. Tortoise called upon Dog to break his egg, but Dog refused, wanting to take it home to enjoy with wife and children. Tortoise said: 'If you refuse, give me back my piece of meat!' Dog did so. Tortoise said: 'I was only playing. Eat it.' This thing happened twice.

A little farther on, Tortoise said a third time: 'You must now kill goat.' Again the same thing happened. At length, they came to a lake. Dog was very thirsty and drank. While drinking, the meat slipped down his throat. Tortoise saw and made his demand again. This time there was no help. Dog broke his egg. A goat sprang out, and the owner offered one leg to Tortoise in return for the small

piece which had been given him. Tortoise said: 'Not enough!' Therefore Dog gave two legs. Tortoise still said: 'Not enough!' So the other two were added. Again Tortoise said: 'Not enough!' So Dog gave both sides also and lastly all the meat. Then Tortoise said: 'Yes. Now we are equal. You have returned me just what I gave you'—gathered it together and carried it along with him.

Dog ran in front and dug a hole, then buried himself, leaving only his two eyes above ground, and stayed, waiting for Tortoise. Tortoise came along and said: 'What is this thing? Ground has eyes! Never have I seen such a thing before!' He began to shout, but the eyes still looked steadily at him. Then he feared and asked: 'Do you want anything from me?' Eyes never moved. He asked: 'Must I give one piece of meat?' Eyes never changed. Tortoise offered one piece after another till all had been given. At last eyes shut, so Tortoise said: 'Now I have seen a wonderful thing! The eyes of the ground have taken back all the meat I took from Dog.' He left it there on the earth and ran away terrified.[1]

After a while Dog came out, gathered the meat together and took it to his own home. When he got there, he told his family all that had happened. They put the meat in the sun to cook and began to enjoy themselves. The children laughed and said: 'Aha! Your father wanted to fool ours and take our meat. Therefore our father made himself into ground-eyes, terrified yours and got all the meat back; so we will not give you any.'

When the children of Tortoise heard this, they ran home and told their father. Tortoise said: 'All right! I will play friend Dog a trick.' He went and called to Dog: 'Dear friend! Have you heard the news I got to-day?' Dog answered: 'I have heard nothing.' Tortoise said: 'To-night there is to be a great war in this country. Where can you and your family hide? I and mine are seeking a hiding-place, because a very terrible nation is coming

[1] This part of the story was told us in 1908, under the title *Eyes of the Earth*, as a separate tale, by the semi-Bantu Ekoi.

to-night to kill all our people.' Dog answered: 'I will wait till I hear the noises of their coming. Then I will run with my family to the Land of the Dead.' So he went to bed.

About four o'clock Tortoise got up. He had gathered many shells and strung them together. Just before dawn he got up and shook these shells at the back of Dog's house. When Dog heard the noise, he gathered his family and they ran to the Ghost Country, called Nduen Ama.

Tortoise went in and took possession of what was left of the beef. When this was finished, he tried to trace where Dog had gone. Now Tortoise is so cunning that he soon found out the road taken and followed to Nduen Ama. Arrived there, he found Dog beating drum for the ghosts, who were holding a big play in the street. Tortoise went into all houses, ate up the food prepared for the feast, then befouled the empty pots and covered them up again. When he had finished, he went out into the street and said to Dog: 'Excuse me, but I also must beat drum for these people.' He then made certain words with the drum:

'Oboi wari fi boroma,
Ekaki wari fi.
Ekaki wari fi boroma,
Oboi wari fi.
Kilamari gwa gwa gwa
Kilamari gwa.' [1]

As soon as the ghosts heard this, they were angry and ran into their houses to see what had happened. They saw what Tortoise had done and blamed Dog, saying: 'We know Dog. He is our relative. How could he bring such a bad stranger to our country?' So they drove him away. Tortoise had already run away and hidden in the bush.

[1] The literal meaning of this was given as follows: 'He ate the house of Tortoise's father and finished. He ate the house of Tortoise. He ate the house of Tortoise and finished. He ate the house of Tortoise's father.' The last two lines represent the drum chorus. This was explained as meaning 'After eating in my father's house, I came again to my own house and enjoyed myself,' or 'I ate Dog's property. Now I have eaten all ghost people's food also'; but our informants did not seem fully to understand the lines.

Dog and his family were running along the straight road back to their country. Now the people of Nduen Ama were the only ones who had fire. There was none other in the world in those days. So, because they were very angry, they ran to the hearths, where the spoiled chop was, and took burning sticks to throw after Dog. When he saw this, he ran swiftly back, caught up a brand and ran off home, bearing it in his mouth. Soon he met an old woman, who thought: 'What a good thing it would be for us to have fire of our own.' So she took the brand away from Dog, ran and got dry sticks and made fire. This was the first ever seen upon earth. Then all people came round and took some to their houses.

So soon as Sun saw that earth folk were provided with fire, he said to Sky: 'Not necessary to hold ourselves so low any more. They can cook without my help now.' So the whole sky lifted and went up high. This is why it now hangs so far above the earth.

Tortoise and Elephant

Tortoise and Elephant were friends. One king named Oba wanted to give a big play in his country, and told Tortoise to go and kill bush deer for him. In a few minutes Tortoise did so. Oba was astonished and said: 'How did you do it so quickly?'

Again he said: 'I want a leopard for this play.' By cunning, Tortoise snared one and brought to the king. Next time he said: 'I want an elephant,' knowing that Elephant would kill Tortoise. The latter did not know how to get such a big thing. So he took crawfish and nuts, went near where one big elephant was, and began to eat and cry out: 'O what sweet chop! Never have I found anything so sweet!'

Elephant asked: 'What are you eating?' Tortoise answered: 'It is my eye, the sweetest thing on earth.' So Elephant said: 'I want a taste.' Tortoise answered: 'Come along. I must pull out your eyes.' Quickly he cut out an eye, then took crawfish and kernels and gave to his friend. Elephant said: 'Oh! very sweet! Come,

take the other eye.' So again Tortoise did so and Elephant said: 'Very sweet, but where is my sight?' Tortoise went to the bush, got a strong rope and tied round Elephant's neck and said: 'Follow me. We will find sight.'

Tortoise led him to King Oba and said: 'Here, King, is what you asked from me.' When Oba saw this, he gave up trying to kill Tortoise.

This is why Elephant only has little bits of eyes to this day.

Tortoise is thought to be one of the oldest of all beasts. Among Kalabari there is a tradition that two enormous animals, named Oguru and Okku, once lived on earth, but no description of them could be given.

A very old Kalabari woman told us as follows:

'The sun is a man charged by Tamuno to go to and fro, bearing fire to light and heat the world; but we think that some day he will cease from travelling up and down and go to his own station. The moon also is a man, set to the same task at night-time.

'In olden days, before Obiri (Dog) brought fire from the ghost-realm, men could only cook by laying their chop in the rays of the sun, which was then quite close to earth. So soon as the first fires were made, however, the whole sky lifted up and went higher, because the sun was no longer needed to cook chop for men.'

Owerri Ibo tell the following fable about the sun and moon.

'In the old, old days, Sun and Moon were friends. Then they got palaver. Moon said: "Let us go together and work." Sun said: "No! I will not do that. You are too gentle. You never hurt anybody. If I should do like you, nothing would be strong in this world. Everything would be too soft." Moon said "All right! Don't work with me! Don't come near me at all, as you like to hurt everybody!" Chineke heard this palaver and set a time for both, saying to Moon: "You must go by night and show yourself to everybody. Sun! You can show yourself by day."'

'The Sun, Anyanwu, is a man, while Ongwa, the Moon, is a woman. That is why he is so fierce and she so gentle.'

Very little interest is taken in the stars. The most conspicuous planet at the time is known as Igolo, the wife of the moon.

An interesting side-light on the native attitude towards the celestial bodies was given by a Kalabari chief of exceptional intelligence and education. From the general trend of his conversation it was evident that he looked upon the moon as more important than the sun, and, when asked his reasons, answered: 'If the moon did not shine, it would always be dark at night-time; whereas, by day, it is always bright, so that, whether or no the sun shines, does not much matter to us!'

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